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PRACTICAL DISCOURSES UPON OUR *SAVIOUR's* SERMON On the MOUNT.

In Eight VOLUMES.

BY

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DISCOURSE XLIV.

The Lawfulneſs and Unlawfulneſs of ſeeking the Praiſe of Men.

MATTH. vi. 1.

Take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men to be ſeen of them, otherwiſe ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.

OUR Saviour having in the foregoing Chapter (of which I have formerly diſcours'd) well inſtructed his Diſciples in the Matter of their Duty, and ſhewn them,

in ſeveral Particulars, how much the *Righteouſneſs* of a *Chriſtian* ought to *exceed* the *Righteouſneſs* of a *Jew*, [even of a good and righteous *Jew*; of one who is, (as St. *Paul* teſtifies of himſelf, *Phil.* iii. 6. before his Converſion) *as touching the Righteouſneſs which is in the Law, blameleſs*] proceeds in theſe and the following Words to give ſome very neceſſary Directions concerning the Manner of performing all thoſe Duties which are incumbent upon us: and the firſt of them is this; *take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men to be ſeen of them; otherwiſe ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.*

Take heed that ye do not, YOUR ALMS; πρὸς τὸ ἐλεημοσύνλω; ſo it is read in moſt of the *Greek* Copies now extant, and particularly in that from which our Tranſlation was made; [*V. Synopſ. Crit.*] but in others of the moſt ancient Copies it is, πρὸς τὸ δικαιοσύνλω, *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men*; by which Word, *Righteouſneſs*, we uſually underſtand all manner of good Works whatſoever,

ver, whether of Piety, or Juſtice, or Charity; according as the ſame Word is uſed in the 20th Verſe of the foregoing Chapter, *unleſs your Righteouſneſs* ἡ δικαιοσύνη ὑμῶν *ſhall exceed the Righteouſneſs of the Scribes and Phariſees.* And I find it farther obſerv'd, that the ancient *Syriack* and *Arabick* Tranſlations were made from Copies wherein the Words were certainly ſo read; and alſo that ſeveral of the ancient Fathers did ſo cite them: and the vulgar *Latin* Tranſlation was likewiſe plainly made from Copies wherein the Words were ſo written. And moreover that reading, tho' it was not choſen by our *Engliſh* Tranſlators, yet neither was it rejected by them: but as they put the Word *Alms* in the Text, ſo they put the Word *Righteouſneſs* in the Margin; that ſo the *Engliſh* Reader might be aware of this Difference in the *Greek* Copies, and might prefer which reading he thought beſt, and moſt agreeable to the Context: as may be ſeen in the Margin of our great Bibles.

There being therefore ſo many, and ſuch good Authorities, for that way of reading theſe Words, *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men*, I cannot but be inclin'd to think that is the true reading; eſpecially there being alſo good Ground in Reaſon, as well as from theſe Authorities, to believe it ſo.

For if we read the Words as they are in our Tranſlation, *take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men, to be ſeen of them*; the Senſe of this Verſe will be exactly the ſame with that of the three following Verſes: for what Difference is there in Senſe between ſaying, *take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men, to be ſeen of them*; and ſaying *when thou doeſt thine Alms do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, that they may have Glory of Men*? And yet that ſome Difference in Senſe was deſign'd between theſe Words and thoſe, ſeems evident from the Conſtruction; Ὅταν ΤΟΥΝ ποιῇς ἐλεημοσύνην, *when* THEREFORE *thou doeſt* ALMS; for by this Conſtruction it ſeems evident, that thoſe Words immediately

ately following the Text, *when* THEREFORE *thou doeſt Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee,* &c. were deſign'd as an Inference or Concluſion from the Words of the Text: and yet if the Words of the Text be read as they are in our Tranſlation, *take heed that ye do not your* ALMS *before Men to be ſeen of them*; nothing will be inferr'd or argu'd from hence in the following Words, *when* THEREFORE *thou doeſt Alms do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do,——that they may have Glory of Men,* but only what had been ſaid before in this Verſe: ſo that in that Caſe the Inference will be juſt the ſame with the Premiſes, and the Senſe of the whole will be exceeding flat and inſipid; as if our *Saviour* had ſaid, *take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men, to be ſeen of them*; THEREFORE *do not your Alms before Men, to be ſeen of them.*

But now, if we read the Words of the Text the other way, and as I ſuppoſe they ought to be read, *take heed that ye do not your* RIGHTEOUSNESS *before Men, to be*

ſeen of them, then theſe Words will be clearly diſtinct in Senſe from thoſe which follow; and the Connexion and Coherence between theſe Words and the following will be alſo plain and natural.

For then the Deſign of theſe Words being plainly to forbid in general the ſeeking our own Praiſe and Honour by *any good Work* which we do; the Deſign of the following Words at the 2d, 3d, and 4th Verſes, will be as plainly to apply this general Caution to the Caſe of *Alms*; and that of the 5th, 6th, and 7th Verſes, to apply the ſame Caution to the Caſe of *Prayer*; and that of the 16th, 17th, and 18th Verſes, to make the like Application of it to the Caſe of *Faſting:* in which three things, *Alms*, *Prayer*, and *Faſting*, it is that Hypocrites are moſt tempted and inclin'd to ſeek the Glory and Praiſe of Men, by making ſhew of extraordinary Charity, or of extraordinary Devotion, or of extraordinary Abſtinence and Mortification.

Thus, I ſay, if we read the Words of the Text after that manner, *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men*,

Men, the Connexion between them and the following Words will be eaſy and natural; and the Word *therefore*, at the beginning of the next Verſe, *Therefore when thou doeſt thine Alms*, will have its true and full Meaning. For our Lord having firſt given a general Caution againſt ſeeking Honour and Praiſe to our ſelves, by our good Works, in theſe Words, *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them*; it was then very proper and natural to repeat the ſame Caution or Advice over again, with a particular Reſpect and Application to thoſe good Works, which Men are moſt liable to be tempted to do with this baſe and mean Deſign, *viz.* Alms, Prayer, and Faſting: it was very proper then to ſay, as he does in the Words following the Text, *therefore when thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee*, &c. And as he does at the 5th Verſe, *and when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are*, &c. And as he does at the 16th Verſe, *moreover when ye faſt, be not as the Hypocrites, of a ſad*

ſad Countenance, &c. thus applying that general Caution or Advice, which he had before given in the Text, againſt deſigning and aiming at our own Glory in *any good Work* which we do, to all thoſe Works in particular, in the doing whereof that Caution or Advice was moſt proper to be given, and moſt needful to be obſerv'd.

Suppoſing therefore, upon the Authorities before-mention'd, and for the Reaſons now given, that that is the true way of reading the Words of the Text, Προσέχετε τὴν ΔΙΚΑΙΟΣΎΝΗΝ ὑμῶν μὴ ποιεῖν, &c. *Take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them; otherwiſe ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* I ſhall, in farther diſcourſing upon them, do theſe three things.

I. I ſhall enquire whether it be altogether unlawful to deſire Praiſe and Commendation from Men, for our good Works, and to delight our ſelves therein.

II. I

II. I ſhall enquire what Deſire of Praiſe from Men, or what Endeavour to procure the ſame, it is, which our *Saviour* here cautions us to take heed of; *Take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them:* and withal I ſhall conſider the Reaſon of this Caution; *otherwiſe (i. e.* if ye do your Righteouſneſs to be ſeen of Men) *ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* And,

III. Laſtly; I ſhall ſhew how this Direction in the Text, *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them*, may be reconcil'd to, and made conſiſtent with, ſeveral Precepts in holy Scripture, which enjoyn the publick Exerciſe and Practice of good Works.

I. I ſhall enquire whether it be altogether unlawful to deſire Praiſe and Commendation from Men, for our good Works, or to delight our ſelves therein; or whether it can be reaſonably ſuppos'd that it was

was our *Saviour*'s Deſign, in theſe Words, to prohibit our ever having any Regard in what we do, to the good Opinion of Men; to forbid us ever ſeeking or deſiring their good Word or Eſteem, or ſetting any Value thereupon. For in this large Senſe the Words are capable of being underſtood and expounded, if upon other Accounts it be reaſonable ſo to underſtand and expound them; *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them.* It may be thought, I ſay, that our *Saviour*'s Meaning herein was to oblige us to have ſuch a Contempt, or rather ſuch an Abhorrence of worldly Fame and Reputation, and popular Applauſe, as ſhould make us rather purpoſely to ſhun it, than induſtriouſly to ſeek it; and ſhould incline us rather to chuſe to do our good Actions in ſuch a manner, as may be leaſt reputable and creditable to our ſelves.

But in order to the Reſolution of this Queſtion, it may be conſider'd,

1. That

1. That a good Name, or a fair and honourable Reputation in the World, is not only what all Men do naturally deſire, as conducing much to the Comfort and Convenience of Life; but that it is likewiſe what in the holy Scripture it ſelf is repreſented as a thing very deſireable, as one of the greateſt earthy Bleſſings which we can enjoy: for *a good Name*, ſays *Solomon, is better than precious Ointment*, Eccleſ. viii. 1. And again, *a good Name is rather to be choſen than great Riches; and loving Favour, rather than Silver and Gold*, Prov. xxii. 1. And again, *the Light of the Eyes rejoiceth the Heart, and a good Report maketh the Bones fat*, Prov. xv. 30.

2. It may be farther conſidered, that a good Name, or Honour and Eſteem in the World, is reckon'd in Scripture as one of thoſe Gifts and Bleſſings of God, wherewith he ſometimes rewards his faithful Servants even in this Life; *them that honour me, I will honour*, ſays God, 1 *Sam.* ii. 30.

ii. 30. *i. e.* I will provide that they ſhall be had in ſuch Eſteem and Reputation in the World as they deſerve; for ſo it follows, *and they that deſpiſe me ſhall be lightly eſteemed.* And, *there is a Man*, ſays *Solomon*, *to whom God hath given Riches and Honour*, Eccleſ. vi. 2. It ſeems then that worldly Honour is the Gift and Bleſſing of God, as well as worldly Riches: a Gift it is, which he oftentimes beſtows upon ſuch as do well, both as an Encouragement to them to proceed in well-doing; and as a Motive to excite others to endeavour to obtain a fair Eſteem and Reputation in the World, by the ſame good Courſe by which theſe have attain'd it. Nay, farther,

3. Worldly Honour is in ſeveral Places of Scripture propos'd as a Recompence, in part, of virtuous and good Actions; and we are therein frequently mov'd to the doing of ſuch Actions as are honourable and Praiſe-worthy, by this Conſideration, *viz.* that thereby we take the beſt and ſureſt Courſe to obtain Honour and Praiſe from

from Men. *By Humility and the Fear of the Lord are Riches and Honour*, ſays *Solomon*, *Prov.* xxii. 4. And again, *Prov.* viii. 18. *Riches and Honour are with me*; (ſays *Wiſdom*, *i. e.* Religion and Virtue, uſing this as a Motive to perſuade Men to the Practice and Exerciſe of Virtue.) But this is done more clearly yet in *Prov.* iv. 7, 8, 9. *Wiſdom*, (*i. e.* as was ſaid before, Religion and Virtue) *is the principal thing, therefore get Wiſdom, and with all thy Getting, get Underſtanding; exalt her, and ſhe ſhall promote thee; ſhe ſhall bring thee to Honour when thou doſt embrace her; ſhe ſhall give to thine Head an Ornament of Grace, a Crown of Glory ſhall ſhe deliver to thee.*

Foraſmuch therefore as a good Name, *i. e.* worldly Honour or Reputation, or *the Praiſe of Men* (for theſe are all one and the ſame) is a thing deſireable, both in itſelf, and in order to other good Purpoſes, is reckon'd among the Gifts and Bleſſings of God, and is ſometimes propoſed, even in the Scripture it ſelf, as a Motive or Encouragement to the doing of ſuch

ſuch Actions as are honourable and Praiſe worthy; I cannot ſee how it can be abſolutely unlawful to deſire it, and moderately to endeavour after it, and to take ſome ſort of Delight and Satisfaction therein when we have obtained it. For if this be a thing much conducing to the Pleaſure of Life, as moſt certainly it is; and if having obtained a good Name and a fair Reputation in the World, we are thereby enabled to do more good both to our ſelves and others, than we could otherwiſe do; I can't ſee why we mayn't deſire this as well as we may any other worldly Bleſſing; nor why we mayn't be pleas'd with it, and thankful for it, as well as with or for any other earthly Enjoyment. And ſince the only ſure way to obtain ſuch Praiſe and Reputation is by virtuous and Praiſe worthy Actions, and they which do well do rarely fail to be well ſpoken of by thoſe who are Witneſſes of their well doing, or come to hear of their good Deeds; I think there can be no moral Evil in having ſome little Eye and Reſpect to this in the doing of what is good, at leaſt

ſo

ſo far as to ſet that Praiſe and Commendation, which we may very probably attain by the Practice of Virtue, in the Scale againſt thoſe worldly Diſcouragements which we may happen to meet with in the doing of our Duty; that ſo the worldly Diſcouragements to Virtue being counterpois'd or over-balanc'd by this worldly Encouragement to it, we may proceed in our virtuous Courſe with greater Chearfulneſs and Alacrity.

Thus far then I ſuppoſe we may lawfully deſire the Praiſe of Men, and take ſome Delight therein; *viz.* as we may deſire, or take Delight in any other worldly Bleſſing or Enjoyment; as we may deſire, or take Delight in any other of the temporal Rewards or Gifts of Providence. And particularly, as there is no moral Evil barely in deſiring Riches, conſider'd as a Means of doing good to others, and of making our own Lives more eaſy and pleaſant, provided that our Deſire thereof be moderate, and with Submiſſion to the Divine Will; and ſo long as our Deſire to better our worldly Condition does

not betray us to the Commiſſion of any of thoſe Sins which an inordinate Love of Money is apt to put Men upon. And as there is no moral Hurt in rejoicing in that plentiful Proviſion of worldly good things, which the Bounty and good Providence of God has been pleas'd to allot to us; provided that we do not ſet our Hearts thereupon, nor place our Happineſs therein, nor forget that God, from whoſe Bounty we receiv'd this large Portion, and have a Mind diſpos'd and prepar'd to give up all for *Chriſt*, and for the keeping of a good Conſcience, if ever we ſhould be call'd thereto; ſo neither can I think there is any moral Evil barely in the Deſire of Praiſe and Commendation from Men, or barely in taking ſome Pleaſure and Satisfaction therein: provided that our Deſire thereof be moderate, and that we ſeek to attain it only by the doing of what is good; and that when we have attained it, we take no more Delight and Pleaſure therein than may lawfully be taken in any worldly Good or Enjoyment; and that we have a Mind fully diſpos'd, and firmly reſolv'd, to

to follow *Chriſt, thro' evil Report*, as well as *thro' good Report*, and prefer the keeping of a good Conſcience before the getting or the keeping of a good Name.

For certainly we may be allow'd to deſire, and to take delight in a greater worldly Good, as well as to deſire and to take delight in a leſſer Good of the ſame Kind. If therefore we may in ſome meaſure deſire an Increaſe of Wealth, and may lawfully receive ſome Pleaſure and Content from it; I can ſee no reaſon why we may not likewiſe innocently deſire in ſome meaſure a good Name: or why we may not, lawfully, receive ſome Pleaſure and Content from *that*; it being, in the Judgment of *Solomon* himſelf in the Words before cited, *better than great Riches*: and conſequently with better Reaſon to be in ſome meaſure eſteem'd and valu'd by us.

But when I have ſaid this, I have ſaid, I think, all that can be ſaid upon the Point: when I have ſaid that there is no Sin (as indeed I ſuppoſe there is not) merely in deſiring Praiſe and Commendation from Men, and in doing well, only that we

may be well ſpoken of, I have ſaid as much the Caſe will bear. For if there be no Sin in it, that's all; 'tis certain there is no Virtue or Goodneſs in it: it may be worldly Prudence, but it is not ſpiritual Wiſdom. For he is plainly no better a Man, who does a commendable or Praiſe-worthy Action, only that he may be commended and praiſed for it, than he who abſtains from the intemperate Uſe of Meats and Drinks only for his Health Sake; or than he who is induſtrious in his Buſineſs, only in order to increaſe his Wealth. The ſeveral Ends propos'd by all theſe Men, *viz. Fame*, *Health* and *Wealth*, being all of them ſuch things as may lawfully be deſir'd; and the Means whereby they do all ſeek to attain their ſeveral Ends being innocent, their Actions may likewiſe well enough be reckon'd innocent or indifferent, *i. e.* neither good nor bad; but then that's all which can be ſaid of them. For as they are not bad, becauſe there is nothing morally evil, either in the End or in the Means; ſo neither are they good, becauſe, *Bonum ex integrâ cauſâ*, becauſe there

there is no Action morally good, unleſs it be good throughout; unleſs we both do the thing which is good, and are alſo moved to it by a Principle of Religion, and do it with a religious End and Deſign. So that when we do an Action which in it ſelf is a good Action, with no other Deſign but only to advance our own Honour and Reputation in the World by it, and reſt and pleaſe our ſelves in that Honour and Reputation which we do thereby acquire; the moſt which can be ſaid of ſuch an Action is, that it is innocent, that there's no Harm or Evil in it. But in caſe we have a farther Deſign to make uſe of that Honour and Reputation which this Action may give us in the World to ill Purpoſes, as to miſlead the Ignorant into Error, or any ways to cheat, defraud, or abuſe thoſe, who, upon the Account of this Reputation, ſhall be perſuaded to put more than ordinary Truſt and Confidence in us; (which was the Caſe of thoſe Hypocritical *Phariſees* to whom chiefly our *Saviour* in this Place had an Eye:) then I ſay that our Action, which in it ſelf, or as to

the Matter of it, was good; and which, if it had been done only for our Credit Sake, might have been thought indifferent, becomes one of the worſt and greateſt of Sins.

And this leads me to the ſecond thing propounded, which was,

II. To enquire what Deſire of Praiſe from Men, or what Endeavour to procure the ſame, our *Saviour* here cautions us to take heed of; *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men to be ſeen of them*; and withal, to conſider the Reaſon of this Caution: *otherwiſe* (*i. e.* if ye do your Righteouſneſs before Men to be ſeen of them) *ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.*

And the Caution is ſo very plainly expreſs'd here by our *Saviour*, that we can't, I think, well miſtake his Meaning: for he does not forbid us to do publickly, and in the Sight of others, ſuch Acts of Righteouſneſs as are of a publick Nature; but he only forbids us to affect to do any Acts of

of Righteouſneſs, any good Works, in a more publick Manner than their Nature does require; to this only Intent, that they may be ſeen of Men, and that we may thereby procure Praiſe and Commendation to our ſelves. He does not ſimply and abſolutely condemn all ſeeking of Praiſe and Glory from Men as ſinful in it ſelf, (tho' it is without doubt very ſinful, as the Deſire of any other worldly Good or Satisfaction is, if it be immoderate, or if we take more Care about it than it deſerves; or if we value it at more than it is worth; or if we reſt in it as our chief End and our greateſt Happineſs;) but he blames thoſe, as guilty of great Imprudence, who propoſe to themſelves the Glory and Praiſe of Men as the End of their good Actions, and of their Works of Righteouſneſs, becauſe while they catch at the Shadow they let go the Subſtance: he blames them, becauſe they do not receive ſo much Fruit and Benefit from their good Works as they might have done; and becauſe the End which they propoſe to themſelves is ſmall, trifling and inconſiderable;

ſiderable; and ſuch as, when they ſhall have obtain'd it, will yield them no Content and Satisfaction anſwerable to their Pains in the Purchaſe of it: ſo that tho' they do attain their End, they may yet in truth be ſaid to have loſt their Labour.

For the only Good, which is truly worth our ſtriving and contending earneſtly for, is a bleſſed and glorious Immortality; that *Crown of Glory that fadeth not away*, which God has laid up for all thoſe who love and obey him. So that he who does his good Works to be ſeen of Men, and that he may have Glory and Praiſe of Men, is therein guilty of great Folly and Imprudence; becauſe he doth not make the moſt which he might do of his Work. For is it not great Folly in a Servant, when he might have a good and gainful Service, to take up with a bad one; with a Service wherein there is nothing to be had but Hunger and hard Work? Is it not Folly in a Man to ſerve for nothing, when for the very ſame Service he might have had good Wages? But now this is plainly the Caſe of that Man who ſeeks after popular

pular Praiſe and Applauſe; who makes the obtaining that the End and Deſign of his Actions, and *does* his *Righteouſneſs before Men*, only *to be ſeen of them:* for he might, by the very ſame Works of Righteouſneſs, if they had been done out of a Principle of Obedience to God have earn'd a good Portion, have purchas'd an Inheritance in Heaven. Is it not therefore an Inſtance of great Folly, that neglecting this great Recompence of Reward which God has propoſed to thoſe who do his Will, and who ſeek to approve themſelves to him; to doe all the ſame Work, and take all the ſame Pains, only to procure the good Word and Eſteem of Men? Eſpecially, when the ſincerely good *Chriſtian*, who ſerves God only out of a Principle of Conſcience and Religion, and thereby aſſures to himſelf a bleſſed and glorious Immortality in the other World; has as good a Claim to, and as great Aſſurance of obtaining this good Name and Reputation in the World, as he himſelf, or any other Man can have, who makes the

the obtaining of this his only Aim and Deſign.

So that in truth the Queſtion, in this Caſe, is not whether the Subſtance be better than the Shadow, whether *the Praiſe of God* be more worth than *the Praiſe of Men*; (tho' if that were the Queſtion it might be very eaſily determin'd;) but the Queſtion here is, whether it be beſt to direct all our Actions to God, and to expect an eternal Recompence of Reward from him, over and above that good Name, and fair Eſteem in the World, which is naturally and uſually the Conſequence of virtuous and good Actions; or whether it be beſt by aiming at this laſt only, (and that too without greater Certainty of obtaining it, than the truly good and religious Man has;) to quit all Claim and Title to the Bleſſing and Reward of Heaven? For this is what they do, who *do* their *Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of Men*, and to have Praiſe of Men; our *Saviour* himſelf here ſays, that ſuch ſhall ſhall *have no Reward of their Father which is in Heaven*.

And

And in this Judgment here given by our *Saviour* upon the Caſe, there is plainly great Reaſon and Equity; [*if ye do your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them, ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.*] For if we take Men for our Pay-Maſters, (which we do, when we *do* our *good Works before them, to be ſeen of them*, and to be commended and applauded by them;) we thereby clearly ſhew, either that we dare not truſt God for a Recompence, or elſe that we do not think that the Recompence which he has promis'd is worth our ſeeking for, or deſiring. And we can't in Reaſon expect that he ſhould confer upon us a Benefit which we our ſelves do deſpiſe. When we do our good Works to be ſeen of Men, and to have Glory of Men, we take this for our Reward; we do in effect declare that we deſire no other, at leaſt no other in Compariſon with this; and that we had rather be paid this way than any other. If therefore we are paid this way, if we have this Reward, (which, as our *Saviour* obſerves at the 3[d] Verſe

Verſe of this Chapter, they commonly have who do thus ſeek for it; *verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward*; having, I ſay, this Reward) which we did chiefly, if not only deſire; we ought to be contented with our Portion, and ſatisfyed with our own Choice. But whether we are ſatisfied with it or not, this is, in that Caſe, all which we are ever like to have; this is all which we can in any Reaſon claim or expect: nay, I add, tho' we ſhould miſs of this, we could yet look for no other; for in this Senſe thoſe Words before cited may be underſtood, *they have their Reward, i. e.* they have all which they ever will have: and Reaſon good; for he who ſeeks only to pleaſe Men, does not ſeek to pleaſe God; and he who ſeeks to pleaſe Men rather than God, does not pleaſe God at all: *If I yet pleaſed Men I ſhould not be the Servant of Chriſt*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *Gal.* i. 10. He who only deſigns to approve himſelf to Men, does not deſign to approve himſelf to God; and how can he in reaſon look for any Reward from God for that Work, whatever

whatever it was, or how good ſoever it was in it ſelf, which was not done out of Obedience to God? By which he did not intend to ſerve God, but himſelf only; which he did not at God's Command, but only to advance his own Honour and Reputation. If ye do thus, ſays our *Saviour*, (and the Judgment is plainly very juſt and equitable,) if ye *do your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them, ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.*

I proceed now, in the third Place,

III. To ſhew how this Direction in the Text, *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them*, may be reconciled to, and made conſiſtent with ſeveral other Precepts in holy Scripture, which enjoyn the publick Exerciſe and Practice of good Works.

For we are commanded, in Scripture, *to provide things honeſt in the ſight of all Men*, Rom. xii. 17. *To provide for honeſt things, not only in the ſight of the Lord, but alſo in the ſight of Men*, 2 *Cor.* viii. 21.

To

To have our Converſation honeſt, (i.e. fair, comely, and praiſeworthy) *before the Gentiles,* 1 Pet. ii. 12. *To adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things,* Tit. ii. 10. Not only to have Regard to ſuch things as are true and juſt, and pure in themſelves, but likewiſe to ſuch as are apt to procure us Love and Eſteem; to ſuch things as are well reputed, and well ſpoken of; to ſuch things as are reckon'd honourable, and deſerving of Commendation; *Phil.* iv. 8. *Whatſoever things are honeſt, (i. e.* well thought of,) *whatſoever things are lovely, whatſoever things are of good Report, if there be any Virtue, and if there be any Praiſe, think on theſe things.* But above all, that Precept of our Lord himſelf, in the former part of this his Sermon upon the Mount, in *Matth.* v. 16. may ſeem the moſt contrary to this Precept in the Text; becauſe there he ſeems moſt expreſſly to command the very ſame thing which here he ſo ſtrictly cautions againſt; *viz.* the doing our good Works to be ſeen of Men. *Take heed,* ſays he in the Text, *that ye*

do

do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them; and yet there he had ſaid, *let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works.* How can theſe two be reconcil'd together?

But this Difficulty I have formerly, when I was diſcourſing on thoſe Words, endeavour'd to give an Account of; and of what I then ſaid this is the Sum.

1. I obſerv'd, that what our *Saviour*, in this Place, condemns in the hypocritical *Phariſees*, and forbids in his Diſciples, is, not their doing publickly ſuch Actions of Virtue and Religion, as are of a publick Nature; but either their affecting to do ſuch things more publickly than was needful or expedient, or elſe their publiſhing and proclaiming thoſe Acts which might very well, and which had much better have been kept ſecret. For he does not here blame them merely for doing their *Righteouſneſs before Men*, but for doing it before Men that *they might be ſeen of Men*, and *commended by Men*; when as, if their Deſign had been to approve themſelves

ſelves to God, they might as well, and would rather, have choſen to have done it more ſecretly. And ſo likewiſe in the following Verſes, where he applies this general Caution againſt Vain-Glory to ſome particular Caſes; he does not blame them for doing publick Works of Charity, when the Occaſion was publick; but for calling the People together to take notice of the Diſtribution of their private Alms: neither does he blame them for publickly praying in the Temple, at the Hours appointed for publick Prayer, but only for putting up their private Petitions, more proper for a Cloſet, in Places of publick Concourſe, and in the Corners of the Streets: neither, laſtly, does he condemn them for appearing to faſt upon a publick Faſt-Day, but only for publiſhing their private Faſts. Now theſe things are clearly diſtinct; and they are alſo both good in their proper Seaſon: for it is neceſſary ſometimes to do our Alms publickly, thereby to gain Credit to our Religion, and to ſet a good Example of Charity to others; and at other times to give Alms privately

ly, to approve our Sincerity to God and our own Conſciences. It is neceſſary ſometimes to pray publickly, thereby to make open Profeſſion of our Religion, and to own before all the World our Obligation to God, and our Dependence upon him; but at other times, when our Confeſſion is of ſecret Sins, or our Petitions to God are private and peculiar to our ſelves, a Cloſet is a more proper Place than the Corner of a Street, or even than the Temple it ſelf: and it is likewiſe neceſſary at ſome times, *viz.* on Days appointed for ſolemn Faſting, to faſt publickly, and to appear to do ſo; and at other times to keep private Faſts between God and our ſelves, and not let the World know any thing thereof. Theſe Duties therefore being clearly diſtinct, and both neceſſary in their proper Seaſon, that Place in the foregoing Chapter, and thoſe other Texts before-cited, which command the publick Exerciſe of Religion, and this Text, and the following Paſſages in this Chapter, which forbid a vain-glorious

Shew of Religion, are by no Means contrary or repugnant to each other.

2. I did alſo farther obſerve, that the Ground and Reaſon for which our *Saviour* in the foregoing Chapter commands us to *let* our *Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee* our *good Works*, and for which he here forbids us *to do our Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them*, is likewiſe clearly diſtinct and different: for the Reaſon why we are here forbidden *to do our Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them*, is, becauſe if this be our Deſign, to be ſeen of Men, and to be commended by Men, our good Action ceaſes to be good, becauſe it is not done for a ſpiritual and religious End; but if we do our Righteouſneſs before Men, ſo as to be ſeen of them, to the Intent that Men may be edified by our good Example, and God more glorified in the World by our publick Profeſſion of our Obedience to him, this is the beſt and nobleſt End which we can propoſe to our ſelves in any thing which we do; and the Publickneſs

Publickneſs of the Action, if indeed this be the true and only Reaſon of our making it ſo publick, is ſo far from detracting from its Praiſe and Excellency, that it rather adds very much thereto.

And this is a very clear Difference between that Practice which our *Saviour* in the foregoing Chapter had commanded, and that which here, in the beginning of this Chapter, he condemns. The Actions indeed in themſelves are the ſame; they are Acts materially good, or Works of Righteouſneſs, which are ſpoken of in both Places; and they both agree in a very remarkable Circumſtance: they are both done in publick, and in the ſight of Men; but then the Ends for which they are choſen to be done publickly, and in the ſight of Men, are clearly different. For the Hypocrites do their Works of Righteouſneſs publickly, that they may be ſeen of Men; but then that's the only Reaſon why they do them ſo, nay indeed why they do them at all; not to pleaſe God, but to procure Applauſe from Men; not to gain Honour to God and Religion,

but to purchaſe Reputation to themſelves; and here they reſt, and with this they are ſatisfyed: this, therefore, our *Saviour* blames them for. But now the good *Chriſtian*, tho' he, likewiſe, ſo does his good Works, that they may be ſeen of Men, yet 'tis not for that Reaſon only that he does them ſo; for he does all the ſame good Works at other times, when he knows he is ſeen by none but God: ſo that to be ſeen of Men is not his chief Motive, his ultimate Deſign; he does not reſt in that alone, nor yet in the worldly Advantages which he may reap thereby; but Obedience to God is the Spring and Principle of his Actions: he does the Works, becauſe God has commanded them; and if he liv'd alone in a Wilderneſs, he would do all the ſame things which he does now, ſo far as he had Opportunity for the doing them: and if at any time he chuſes to do a good Action publickly, 'tis not that he himſelf may have Praiſe of Men, but that he may thereby do better Service to God; that others may be incited and encouraged by his

his Example to the Practice of the ſame Virtues, and that God may be glorifyed thereby.

And thus much may ſerve to have been ſpoken concerning the general Caution here given in the Text againſt ſeeking Praiſe and Glory from Men to our ſelves, by any good Work which we do; *take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them; otherwiſe ye have no Reward of your Father which is in Heaven.* Here, therefore, I ſhall conclude; becauſe the Application made by our *Saviour*, in the following part of this Chapter, of this general Caution againſt vain Glory, to ſome particular Works of Righteouſneſs, and thoſe eſpecially in which Men are moſt apt to ſeek Glory and Praiſe to themſelves, *viz. Alms*, *Prayer*, and *Faſting*, will afford Matter enough for ſeveral Diſcourſes hereafter, if God ſhall grant Opportunity.

THE METHOD OF Doing ALMS.

D'

DISCOURSE XLV.

The Method of doing Alms.

MATTH. vi. 2, 3, 4.

Therefore when thou doeſt thine Alms do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the Streets; that they may have Glory of Men; verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward.

But

But when thou doeſt Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doeth.

That thine Alms may be in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

IN the foregoing Words, on which I diſcourſed the laſt time, our *Saviour* had given a general Caution to his Diſciples, againſt ſeeking their own Praiſe and Glory in any good Works which they do; *Take heed that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them.* In our Tranſlation indeed we read the Words otherwiſe; *Take heed that ye do not your* Alms *before Men*; but that in other Copies they are read, as I before repeated them, *Take heed that ye do not your* Righteouſneſs *before Men.* Our *Tranſlators* themſelves give us notice, when inſtead of the Word *Alms*, which

which from ſome Copies is put into the Text, they inform us, (as may be ſeen in the Margins of our great Bibles) that in other Copies the Word is *Righteouſneſs*. And that this is moſt probably the true Reading, I ſhewed the laſt time by ſeveral Reaſons and Authorities; I ſay therefore, that reading theſe Words thus, and as I ſuppoſe they ought to be read, *take heed that ye do not your* Righteouſneſs *before Men to be ſeen of them*, they contain a general Caution againſt ſeeking our own Glory in any good Works that we do; which general Caution our *Saviour* proceeds, in theſe Verſes which I am now upon and in ſome other Parts of this Chapter, to apply to particular Caſes; inſtancing ſpecially in thoſe Works, in and by which Men may be moſt ready and inclin'd to ſeek worldly Honour and Applauſe to themſelves, which are *Alms*, *Prayer*, and *Faſting*.

Firſt then he applies that general Caution, before given againſt deſigning and aiming at our own Glory in any good Work

Work which we do, to the Caſe of *Alms*; and this he does in the Words of the Text; *Therefore, when thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men*, &c.

Then, at the 5th and 6th Verſes he applies the ſame Caution to the Caſe of *Prayer*, in thoſe Words; *And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men; verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward. But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

And having upon this Occaſion mention'd the Duty of Prayer, our Lord in the following Verſes, to the 16th, makes a Digreſſion from the Subject of Vain-Glory which he was before upon, that he might give ſome other needful Directions concerning

cerning Prayer: which having done, he then reſumes his former Subject; applying, at the 16th, 17th, and 18th Verſes, the general Caution before given againſt Vain-Glory, to the Caſe of Faſting, in thoſe Words: *Moreover, when ye faſt, be not as the Hypocrites, of a ſad Countenance, for they diſfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to faſt; verily I ſay unto you they have their Reward. But thou, when thou faſteſt, anoint thy Head and waſh thy Face, that thou appear not unto Men to faſt, but unto thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

The firſt of theſe is the Subject I am now to diſcourſe of, *viz.* the Application made by our *Saviour* of that general Caution before given againſt deſigning and aiming at our own Glory in any good Work which we do, to the particular Caſe of giving *Alms. Therefore, when thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues*

Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men; verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward. But when thou doeſt Alms, let not thy Left Hand know what thy Right Hand doeth; that thine Alms may be in ſecret, and thy Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.

In which Words there is,

1. A Duty ſuppoſed, *when thou doeſt thine Alms.* It is not here preſcrib'd or commanded that we ſhould give Alms; but 'tis ſuppos'd, that that is a Duty ſo clearly taught by the Light of Nature, or ſo plainly preſcribed elſewhere in holy Scripture, that whoever is failing in that, muſt be condemn'd by his own Conſcience as deficient in a neceſſary Duty of Religion.

2. Here is an Application of the general Caution given in the foregoing Verſe againſt ſeeking Glory to our ſelves by any good Works, to the particular Caſe of giving Alms; *Take heed*, ſays our *Saviour*, *that*

that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men to be ſeen of them; therefore, when thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.

3. Here is a Declaration of the Unprofitableneſs of thoſe Works of Charity which are done with this baſe and mean Deſign of procuring Honour and Applauſe to our ſelves thereby. If we ſhould gain Honour and Eſteem to our ſelves by ſo doing our Alms, (as 'tis indeed probable enough we may do, for Men can ſee only the good Work it ſelf, and can't judge certainly what was our End and Deſign in the doing it;) yet that, our *Saviour* here tells us, is all that we ſhall ever get by ſuch an Alms; *Verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward:* they have the Reward which they look'd for and aim'd at, and therefore muſt expect no other.

4. Here is a Method preſcrib'd in the doing of our Alms, which, if we obſerve, we

we ſhall be ſecure againſt that Snare which we are before caution'd to beware of; and that is, to do them with all the Privacy and Secrecy that is poſſible; *When thou doeſt Alms, let not thy Left Hand know what thy Right Hand doth, that thine Alms may be in ſecret.* And,

5. And laſtly, Here is a Promiſe of a ſure and ample Recompence from God for all thoſe Works of Charity which we do in Obedience to his Command, and out of a true Principle of Love to God and our poor Neighbour, tho' they be done never ſo ſecretly: *Thy Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.*

I ſhall ſpeak ſomewhat of each of theſe in their Order with all the Brevity I can.

1. Then, here is (as I ſaid) a Duty ſuppos'd; *When thou doeſt thine Alms.* It is not here preſcrib'd or commanded that we ſhould give Alms; but 'tis ſuppos'd, that that is a Duty ſo clearly taught by the Light of Nature, or ſo plainly preſcrib'd elſewhere

elſewhere in Holy Scripture, that whoever is failing in that, muſt be condemn'd by his own Conſcience as deficient in a neceſſary Duty of Religion.

When thou doeſt thine Alms. Indeed our *Saviour* had no need here to preſcribe or command the giving Alms, becauſe he had done that ſo very lately in this very Sermon, at the 42ᵈ ℣. of the foregoing Chapter, *Give to him that asketh thee*; or, as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, *Give to every Man that asketh thee.* And I hope there is as little Need that I ſhould now ſpend Time in ſhewing the Obligation which lies upon us to Works of Charity, and particularly to the giving of Alms, according to our Ability, as proper Occaſions of giving are offer'd to us. For he muſt be a great Stranger to the Bible, and very little inſtructed in the Chriſtian Religion, who does not know that the Duty of Alms-giving is, in the Holy Scripture, in the moſt expreſs Words enjoined; that the continual Exerciſe of it, as there is Ability and Opportunity, is therein moſt earneſtly preſs'd; that it is therein more

frequently than moſt other Duties inforc'd and inculcated; that with the Practice of it God has declared himſelf moſt highly delighted; and that to the liberal Exerciſe thereof, he has promiſed the moſt ample Recompence of Reward. If theſe things were not (as I hope and ſuppoſe they are) well known to you all, I might eaſily ſpend well nigh the whole Time allotted for this Diſcourſe, only in reciting to you thoſe Texts of Scripture wherein the Practice of this Duty is preſcrib'd, commanded, enforc'd or encourag'd.

But it is not my Deſign at preſent to enlarge upon this Subject, there being at other Times frequent Occaſions afforded to diſcourſe of it. At this time, therefore, I will offer to your Conſideration only this one thing, ſerving to ſhew as well the Excellency as the Neceſſity of this Duty; *viz.* that Alms-giving is almoſt the only Duty wherein, and whereby, in peaceable Times, in a flouriſhing State of the Church, and in a proſperous Condition of Life, a Man can exerciſe, teſtify, and declare his Faith and Truſt and Confidence

Confidence in God, and his assur'd Hope of receiving Good from him in Recompence for what he does in Obedience to his Command.

For almost all the other Duties of Christianity are such as carry their Reward with them; they are such as have a natural Tendency to promote our temporal Welfare, either to preserve our Health, or to prolong our Life, or to increase our Wealth, or to make us lov'd and respected by others; so that the doing them is no convincing Argument to others, and can hardly afford certain Assurance to our selves of the Integrity of our Wills, and the Sincerity of our Obedience, and the Strength of our Faith. Most other good Works bring a Reward and Advantage in hand to those who do them; so that the same materially good Works which a good Man does out of a Principle of Faith and Obedience towards God, the same even a bad Man, if he were wise for himself and consider'd and consulted his own temporal Advantage, would do out of a Principle of worldly Prudence: so that in

good Times that Argument of the Apoſtle St. *James* does in great meaſure fail; *ſhew me thy Faith without thy Works, and I will ſhew thee my Faith by my Works*; becauſe the very ſame Works which are done by a good Man by the Power of Faith, may be done by another Man for worldly Conſiderations only.

Thus, for Inſtance. A good Man is juſt in all his Dealings, becauſe he knows it is his Duty to do to others as he would they ſhould do to him; and he has ſet himſelf to walk ſteadily by this Rule: and a bad Man, who has little or no Conſcience; yet, if he has but common Prudence, will in moſt Caſes do the ſame, becauſe he will ſee that Honeſty and fair Dealing is the beſt Way to thrive in the World, and that by Diſhoneſty and Injuſtice he ſhall expoſe himſelf to Shame and Puniſhment.

Thus again, A good Man is temperate in all Things; and the principal Reaſon of his being ſo, and that which alone would make him ſo, is the Command of God, who has laid it upon us as a Duty of Religion *to abſtain from fleſhly Luſts, which war*

war againſt the Soul; and declar'd, that *no Whoremonger or Drunkard ſhall inherit his everlaſting Kingdom.* But ſo will he be likewiſe who is only wiſe for this World; he, I ſay, tho' he has no Fear of God, or Senſe of Religion, will yet take care to keep himſelf ſober and temperate, and will avoid all Exceſs in ſenſual Pleaſures and Enjoyments, becauſe he ſees, by daily Obſervation, that all Exceſs in ſuch Pleaſures tends to the impairing the Health, and the Deſtruction of Life. And,

Thus again, A good Man, out of a Principle of Religion towards God, is regular and conſtant in all the publick Exerciſes of his Worſhip; he obſerves ſtrictly the Times appointed for Religion; he duely frequents the Church and the Sacrament, and is a Pattern of publick Piety to all his Neighbours. But this publick Religion has its preſent Reward; it makes a Man honour'd and reſpected by all who know him; it begets in others a Truſt and Confidence in him; it gives him a good Name and a fair Reputation in the World, which proves of great Advantage to him

in his ſecular Buſineſs and Concerns: for which Reaſon the Hypocrite, tho' without any true Senſe of Religion, not only equals him, but many times out-does him in the outward Profeſſion, in the external Shew and Appearance of it.

Thus I ſay, in moſt of the good Works which God requires of us, we do truly ſerve our ſelves; and tho' we had no Faith in God, nor any Expectation of Reward from him, we ſhould nevertheleſs, if we were well advis'd, do all the ſame Works for our own temporal Intereſt and Advantage Sake. We find our own preſent Account ſo much in moſt of the other Exerciſes of Virtue, that it is impoſſible for others to judge, and in many Caſes very hard, even for our ſelves to diſcern, whether we are moved to the doing them by a Principle of Religion, or by a Principle of worldly Prudence and Policy: or if we are moved to the doing them by both theſe Motives, it will be difficult to know which of them, whether the ſpiritual or the ſecular Motive, has the moſt Influence upon our Wills, and does the moſt incline us to Action;

Action; ſo that conſequently our doing them is no certain Proof of our Truſt in God, and of our Faith in the Promiſes of the Goſpel.

But the Duty I am now ſpeaking of, *viz.* the Exerciſe of Alms-giving, is a plain Proof of both theſe; for in giving away what we have, there is manifeſtly no preſent Gain: there is indeed manifeſtly ſome preſent Loſs; for what we give to another, we loſe from our ſelves; neither can we reaſonably hope to make any *worldly Gain* of it hereafter, becauſe we give it to the poor, to thoſe who, we know, are not able to repay us, to thoſe who, in all Probability, will never be in a Condition to requite us. All the Hope therefore which we can have of reaping any Advantage to our ſelves, either in this World or the other, from our Alms-giving, muſt be grounded on the Promiſes of God; ſuch as that in *Prov.* xxviii. 27. *He that giveth to the poor ſhall not lack*; and that in *Prov.* xix. 17. *He that hath Pity on the poor lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given will he pay him again*; and that of our Saviour, *Luke* vi.

38. *Give and it ſhall be given unto you; good Meaſure, preſſed down, ſhaken together and running over*; and that in *Luke* xiv. 13, 14. *When thou makeſt a Feaſt, call the poor, the maimed, the lame and the blind, and thou ſhalt be bleſſed; for they cannot recompenſe thee, for thou ſhalt be recompenſed at the Reſurrection of the Juſt.*

'Tis true, indeed, this is not altogether without Exception; for as we may do theſe Works of Charity, (and as the *Hypocrites* ſpoken of in the Text did do them) we may have a ſecular Aim and Deſign therein; we may hope, by the Reputation of our Charity, to gain ſuch Credit to our ſelves as may be an Advantage to us in our worldly Concerns: and therefore of the *Hypocrites*, who do their Alms to be ſeen of Men, and to have Glory of Men, our *Saviour* here ſays, *that they have their Reward, i. e.* that they do many times obtain that which they ſeek for, *viz.* Glory and Praiſe from Men. But it is, without Exception, true of thoſe Alms which we give in ſuch manner as our *Saviour*

Saviour here directs us, that they are, more than almoſt any other good Work which we can exerciſe our ſelves in, a Proof of our Truſt in God, and of our Faith in his Promiſes: for when we give Alms ſecretly, and unknown to all the World, we can expect no Glory from Men; and when we give to the poor, who cannot recompenſe us, we can expect no Requital but from God, and it can't be ſuppos'd that we would give away what we have in Poſſeſſion, and what, 'tis poſſible, we our ſelves may in time to come have Occaſion to uſe; but only that we have an aſſured Truſt in the Riches and Goodneſs of God, that he both can and will ſupply all our Wants in this World, and alſo abundantly recompenſe us in the other, for all which we have parted with and given away to the poor for his Sake, and at his Command. This is the peculiar Excellency of Alms-giving; by it we give the beſt Proof we can to the World, and from it we obtain the beſt Aſſurance that we can to our ſelves of the Soundneſs and Strength of our Faith; by it

it we plainly demonſtrate, that we do not truſt in our uncertain Riches, but in the living God; by it we clearly ſhew to others, and may be ſatisfyed in our own Minds, that we are ſincere in our Obedience, and that the Good which we do is done out of a ſound Principle of Religion.

Hoping therefore that nothing more is at preſent needful to be ſaid, to ſhew the Obligation which lies upon us to the continual Exerciſe of this Duty of Alms-giving, according to our Ability, and as we have Opportunity; I proceed now to diſcourſe concerning the beſt manner of performing it; and this was the ſecond Point I was to ſpeak to; *viz.*

II. The Application here made by our *Saviour*, of that general Caution which he had before given, againſt ſeeking Glory to our ſelves by any good Work which we do, to the particular Caſe of giving Alms. *Take heed*, ſays he, *that ye do not your Righteouſneſs before Men, to be ſeen of them*; —— *therefore when thou doeſt*

doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, in the Synagogues and in the Streets, that they may have Glory of Men.

The Deſign of which Clauſe is not to forbid the doing publick Works of Charity; for ſo underſtood, this Prohibition would be clearly contrary to that Command which he had before laid upon us, to *let our Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they ſeeing our good Works may glorify our Father which is in Heaven*; but only to forbid our affecting or deſiring to gain Glory and Applauſe to our ſelves from our Alms; and in order to that, making our Alms more publick than the Occaſion of them requires they ſhould be. *When thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee, as the Hypocrites do, that they may have Glory of Men.* We may let Men ſee us, we are not always bound to hide our good Works, and, as our *Saviour* expreſſes it, *put* our *Candle under a Buſhel*; but we are not to call upon Men to ſee and obſerve us, we are not to uſe any Art or Trick to make

make our good Works more taken notice of, than otherwiſe they would be. If therefore an Object of Charity offers it ſelf in the Synagogues, or in the Streets, in any Place where there happens to be a great Concourſe of People, and we are ſo well ſatisfy'd of the Want and Deſert of the Perſon who then asks our Alms, that if no Body were by, we would give towards his Relief; we are not therefore bound to forbear giving to him who needs preſent Relief, becauſe we can't at that time do it without being ſeen and taken notice of: but on the other ſide, if we purpoſely chuſe the moſt publick Occaſions of giving; if we give when Company is by, when at the ſame time, upon the ſame or as good an Occaſion, we would not have given if Company had not been by; and much more, if we uſe any Art to draw Company together, (expreſs'd here by the proverbial Phraſe of *ſounding a Trumpet* before us, in ſuch manner as Stage-Players, or thoſe who ſhew ſtrange Sights, us'd to do, to call a Concourſe of People together;) this is a ſure Sign that it

it is not Obedience to God, or Love to our poor Neighbour, but a deſire of Vain-Glory, which is the chief Motive to our Alms. And if by ſuch an Alms we do purchaſe that Honour and Applauſe to our ſelves which we deſign, (as perhaps we may,) that's all we ſhall ever get by it; of ſuch our *Saviour* here ſays, that *they have their Reward:* they receive in Hand all the Reward (full as much as ſuch Alms can in any Reaſon be thought to deſerve; they receive it all) from Men, and ſo have no Reaſon to expect any more from God.

I only add upon this Head, that 'tis all one as to this Caſe, whether we chuſe to give our Alms in publick, or whether we are the Publiſhers of our own private Charities; for what Difference is there in Reaſon, between doing a thing ſo as that it may be ſeen; and doing it ſecretly, but then afterwards taking all Opportunities to tell others what we have done? And this I mention the rather, becauſe I believe it is a way by which a great many cheat themſelves. They give their Alms in pri-

vate, and in ſo doing obſerve (they think) ſufficiently the Direction given in the Text; but then they enter theſe Diſburſements of Charity into their Books of Accounts; thoſe Books, I mean, which lie open to be ſeen by their Servants and Family; or they take all Opportunities of telling their Friends how very bountiful they have been upon ſuch and ſuch Occaſions: and ſo, by being over-haſty, being not willing to ſtay for all their Reward in the other World, being greedy to receive ſomething in Hand for their Work, they diſcharge God from all farther Payment. And this was the third Point I was to ſpeak to, *viz.*

III. The Unprofitableneſs of thoſe Works of Charity, which are done with the baſe and mean Deſign of procuring Honour and Applauſe to our ſelves thereby: if we ſhould gain Honour and Eſteem to our ſelves by ſo doing our Alms, (as 'tis indeed probable enough we may; for Men can ſee only the good Work it ſelf, and can't judge certainly what was our End and Deſign

Deſign in the doing it,) yet *that*, our *Saviour* here tells us, is all which we ſhall ever get by ſuch an Alms; *verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward:* they have the Reward which they look'd for, and aim'd at, and therefore muſt expect no other.

And what a mean and ſorry Reward is this popular Eſteem, and popular Applauſe? A good Name indeed, ſo far as it puts a Man into a better Capacity of doing good in the World, is very deſireable; but without Regard to that, (and 'tis not with regard to that, that Hypocrites do deſire it;) what is it good for? What is a Man the better or the worſe in himſelf, for what others ſay or think of him? For from what they ſay of him, unknown to him, or behind his Back, (when it may be ſuppos'd that they ſpeak as they think,) he can receive no Pleaſure, becauſe he hears it not, he knows nothing of it: and from what they ſay of him to his Face, he can have but little Satisfaction, becauſe he can't tell whether they think as they ſpeak; he can't tell but that all the Praiſe

and

and Commendation which they beſtow upon him, is only Wheadle and Complement: 'tis certain that ſuch Praiſes and Commendations to a Man's Face are commonly nothing elſe; for nothing is more common in this World, than for Men to ſpeak fair and friendly to thoſe whom they hate, and to flatter with their Lips, while they imagine Evil in their Hearts: how then can he be any ways aſſur'd that the Praiſes which Men give to him are truly meant and well intended, when he ſees and hears daily the like or greater Commendations given to the worſt of Men, to the moſt cruel Tyrants, to the greateſt Oppreſſors of Mankind; to them who ſacrifice whole Nations to their own Rage and Fury, and fill the World with Blood to gratify their own Ambition? Such as theſe, we know, have often been extoll'd to the Sky, by a flattering Crew; have been ador'd, almoſt as Gods, by their courtly Vaſſals; and been repreſented to the World, in Panegyricks and dedicatory Epiſtles, as Perſons the moſt illuſtrious that ever the World had, for Religion

ligion and Piety, for Juſtice and Clemency, and for every thing elſe which is good. Can it be fit then to have any Regard to, or to ſet any Value upon ſuch Commendations, which however they may be ſometimes given to Virtue, are much oftner given to Power; and which, whether they are given ſeriouſly, or flatteringly, the Perſon they are given to can never tell?

But if the Glory and Praiſe of Men were really of greater Worth, and more intrinſick Value, than it is; it would however be but a ſmall thing for a Man to reſt in, and to aim at as the higheſt Good, and as the ultimate End of his Actions; becauſe be it never ſo great a Good, he can't long poſſeſs it: for he can't live long here to enjoy it; and when he is gone out of the World, he will be never the better for the Fame and Reputation which he had while he was in it.

Or however it might be thought worth a Man's while to beſtow his Labour, and to ſpend his Money in the Purchaſe even of this trifling Good, in Caſe he

could not any other way ſpend them to better purpoſe; yet, as the Caſe really is, he who does his Alms, or any other good Works, only to be ſeen of Men, and to have Glory of Men, may truly be reckon'd an improvident Spend-thrift of his Time and Money; becauſe he beſtows them not ſo well as he might have done; becauſe he lays them out upon Trifles and Vanities, when he might have had for them infinitely greater and more ſubſtantial Goods. For 'tis a receiv'd Axiom, that a ſmaller Good, in Compariſon with a greater, is to be reckon'd as an Evil; ſo that conſequently he who aims at a ſmaller Good, and reſts ſatisfied and contented with that, when he might have both aim'd at and obtain'd a Good which was much greater, may truly be ſaid to refuſe the Good, and to chuſe the Evil.

And that's the Caſe here; for to our good Works, and particularly to Works of Charity, if they be done out of a Principle of Obedience and Love to God, God has promis'd an ample Recompence of Rewards; *Treaſures in Heaven, that fail*

fail not; where no Thief approacheth, neither Moth corrupteth; an exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory; an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and which fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us. Is it not then great Indiscretion, not to make the most we might of our Work? Is it not monstrous Imprudence, to take up with a little when we might have had more? To aim only at the least Good, when with the same Endeavour we might have attain'd the greatest of all, even *such good things as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor have entred into the Heart of Man to conceive?*

But now this is what they do, who do their Alms, or indeed any other good Work, to be seen of Men, and to have Glory of Men; they accept of less for their Work than was offered them for it: they might have had a substantial Good, and they, like Fools, take up and are satisfied with a Shadow, with a Trifle; they *love the Praise of Men more than the Praise of God:* and therefore, if they have all which they lov'd, and all which they chose, they have

as much as they ought to be ſatisfied with; but whether they are ſatisfied with it or no, this is all, our *Saviour* here ſays, which they ſhall ever have; *verily, I ſay unto you, they have their Reward:* they have it in Hand, and therefore are not to look for it; they have it all here, as much as they aim'd at and deſired, and therefore can expect nothing more hereafter; or whatever they may vainly expect, they will have nothing more: for our *Saviour* had ſaid expreſſly, at the firſt Verſe of this Chapter, that *they that do their Righteouſneſs to be ſeen of Men, have no Reward of their Father which is in Heaven.* And the Judgment there given by our *Saviour*, as it may be applyed to the Cauſe we are now ſpeaking of, is very juſt and reaſonable; for he who does his Alms that he may have Glory of Men, takes that for his Pay; and therefore being once paid to his Content, he can in Reaſon expect nothing more for his Work: what he means by his Alms is only to ſerve himſelf, and not God; and therefore from God he can't reaſonably

bly look for any Reward; for no Reward or Wages can in any Reaſon be thought due, when no Service at all is done.

But we may be, and oftentimes are miſtaken in our own Meaning and Intention, and in no Inſtance are we more liable or likely to be ſo than in the Caſe of Alms. Here is therefore (and it was the fourth thing I was to ſpeak to)

IV. A Method preſcrib'd by our *Saviour* in the doing of our Alms, which, if we obſerve, we may be the better aſſur'd of our own Sincerity, and of the Uprightneſs of our Intention; and likewiſe be in the beſt manner ſecur'd againſt that Snare which we were before caution'd to beware of; and that is, to do our Alms with all the Privacy and Secrecy which is poſſible: for that's plainly the Meaning of that proverbial Expreſſion, wherein our *Saviour* here delivers this Advice; *When thou doeſt Alms, let not thy left Hand know what thy right Hand doeth, that thine Alms may be in ſecret.* For we can't be ſo vain as to hope to have

Praiſe of Men for what we keep ſecret from them; and if we expect to reap any Reward at all for a good Work ſo done, it muſt be only from God, becauſe it is known only to him.

Nevertheleſs we are not ſo to underſtand theſe Words, as if our *Saviour* had meant that this Method ſhould be always obſerv'd in our giving Alms; as if no Alms would be accepted and rewarded by God, but only what were ſo given; as if it were unlawful to *let our Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they might ſee our good Works:* for this (as I noted before) had been expreſſly commanded in the foregoing Chapter; and there are no good Works more fit to be ſeen, and more likely to gain Glory to God, and Credit to Religion, than Works of Charity.

The Meaning therefore is, that tho' we need not, nay indeed ought not to omit publick Works of Charity, when a publick Occaſion of Charity is offered to us; we ought however ſo to order it, as that all which we have to give to charitable Uſes, be not given upon ſuch publick Occaſions;

caſions; but that we reſerve ſome part of it at leaſt, if we can't well do the whole, to be beſtow'd in the moſt ſecret manner which is poſſible.

For tho' all Works of Charity are certainly acceptable to God, and will be plentifully rewarded by him, which are done out of an hearty Love to God and our Neighbour, whether they be done openly, or in ſecret; yet ſuch is the Falſeneſs and Treachery of our own Hearts, that in thoſe Works of Charity which we do in publick we may eaſily deceive our ſelves: we may think that we deſign and mean well, when yet indeed the Love of Praiſe from Men may have a greater Influence upon us, than a Deſire to approve our ſelves to God. The beſt way therefore to be ſatisfied, the only way, I think, to be well aſſur'd of the Sincerity of our Intention, is to give ſome conſiderable part, at leaſt, of what we allot for charitable Uſes, ſo very privately, that it ſhall be impoſſible for any to know it but God only.

For the Truth is, that publick and private Exerciſes of Charity are both good; nay, they are both beſt, and therefore ought to be both practis'd, according as there are proper Occaſions and Opportunities for either of them. For as they are Inſtances of Obedience to God, and Expreſſions of Love to our Neighbour, they are both alike equally good; but in ſome other Reſpects they are either of them better than the other. For as publick Charity does moſt Good to others by its Example, ſo private Charity yields moſt Comfort to our ſelves, by the Aſſurance which it gives us of our own Sincerity. As by publick Charity we confeſs and adore the Power and Greatneſs of God, ſo by private Charity we glorify and adore his Knowledge; for we ſhould not give Alms in that manner, did we not firmly believe that he ſees the things which are moſt ſecret: as by publick Charity we bring moſt Honour and Credit to our Religion, ſo by private Charity we obtain the greateſt Satisfaction, and Conſolation in our own Minds. And laſtly, as publick

lick Charity is a Proof to others of the Excellency of our Religion, ſo private Charity is a Proof to our ſelves of the Strength and Excellency of our own Faith. And therefore, they being both beſt in their proper Seaſon, the beſt way is ſo to exerciſe the one, as not to neglect the other; *to make our Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee our good Works*, (eſpecially our Works of Charity and Bounty) *and glorify our Father which is in Heaven:* and yet, at the ſame time, *to do other of our Alms ſo much in ſecret, that even our Left Hand may not know what our Right Hand doth.* And by thus abounding in both Sorts of Charity, we ſhall not only enſure, but alſo much increaſe, our Reward; being by our Works of publick Charity entitled to that Promiſe of God, *them that honour me, I will honour*; and by our Works of private Charity to this of our *Saviour* in the Text, *thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.* And this was the fifth and laſt thing I was to ſpeak to, *viz.*

V. The

V. The Promiſe here made by our *Saviour* of a ſure and ample Recompence from God for all thoſe Works of Charity which we do in Obedience to his Command, and out of a true Principle of Love to God and our poor Neighbour, tho' they be done never ſo ſecretly; *thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret, himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.* How ſecret ſoever our Alms may be from Men, they cannot be hidden or unknown to God, *to whom all things are naked and open*; and he will moſt ſurely reward them, perhaps in this World, moſt certainly at the Reſurrection of the Juſt: *For God is not unrighteous,* (as the *Apoſtle* ſays, *Heb.* vi. 10.) *to forget our Work and Labour of Love, which we have ſhewed towards his Name, in miniſtring to his Saints.*

But the Alms here ſpoken of by our *Saviour* being ſuch as are done in ſecret, and are known only to God, it is neceſſary to underſtand his Promiſe of God's openly rewarding them, chiefly of that Reward which he will beſtow upon them at the great Day of Judgment, when *the Secrets of*

of all Hearts ſhall be revealed: becauſe, however, he may (as moſt certainly he oftentimes does) reward theſe ſecret Alms-Givers in ſome meaſure, even in this World, by giving a Bleſſing to their Labours, and increaſing their Subſtance, and proſpering them in whatever they take in hand; (many Promiſes of which Kind we meet with in the Holy Scripture, made to ſuch as are bountiful and liberal in their Alms;) yet, when this does happen, it can't be ſaid to be the open Reward of their Charity and Bounty; becauſe, tho' the Reward itſelf, *i. e.* the remarkable Succeſs which they meet with in every thing that they ſet their Hand to, be viſible to all, and is perhaps taken notice of by a great many; yet it can't be known to the World, that this Bleſſing of Providence is in Reward of their Charity, becauſe their Charity itſelf is ſuppoſed to have been kept ſecret from all the World. But the Time is coming, when (as the *Apoſtle* ſays, 1 *Cor.* iii. 13.) *Every Man's Work ſhall be made manifeſt; for the Day ſhall declare it, viz.* that bright Day of the Coming of our

our Lord to Judgment, Ch. iv. 5. *Who both will bring to Light the hidden things of Darkneſs, and will make manifeſt the Counſels of the Hearts, and then ſhall every Man have Praiſe of God.* Then (as our *Saviour* ſays *Matth.* xiii. 43.) *ſhall the Righteous ſhine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father.* Then will their Reward be indeed open and manifeſt, *when the Son of Man ſhall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with him, and he ſhall ſit upon the Throne of his Glory; and before him ſhall be gather'd all Nations; and he ſhall ſeparate them one from another, as a Shepherd divideth his Sheep from the Goats; and ſhall ſet the Sheep on his Right Hand, but the Goats on the Left; and ſhall then ſay to them on his Right Hand, Come ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the Foundation of the World; for I was an hungred, and ye gave me Meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me Drink; I was a Stranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I*

was

was in Priſon, and ye came unto me: for inaſmuch as ye have done thus unto one of the leaſt of theſe my Brethren, ye have done it unto me, Matth. xxiv. 31.---36, --- 40.

This will certainly be the open Reward of Alms given in ſecret; and yet not of them only, but likewiſe of all other Works of *Charity* which are done *out of a pure Heart and a good Conſcience, and Faith unfeigned.* For it can't be reaſonably ſuppoſed, that the Deſign of our *Saviour*, in the Text, was to command or enjoin only a Circumſtance in the manner of giving Alms, and that too only for its own Sake: for 'tis the Heart only which God looks at; and if that be pure, if the *Conſcience* be *good*, if the *Faith* be *unfeigned*, the Work of Charity will be alike acceptable to him, whether it be done openly or in ſecret. And yet, nevertheleſs, it was highly needful and expedient that this particular Circumſtance, in the manner of our giving Alms, ſhould be preſcrib'd, and that in ſome at leaſt, if not in all our Works of Bounty and Alms giving, it ſhould be carefully

carefully obſerv'd; becauſe, tho' God knows all our Hearts, we our ſelves do hardly know our own Hearts, and ſo can no ways be well aſſured of our Title to this glorious Reward, but by obſerving in our Alms-giving the Direction which is here preſcrib'd; *When thou doeſt thine Alms, let not thy Left Hand know what thy Right Hand doeth, that thine Alms may be in ſecret:* and, by obſerving it, we may obtain a good Aſſurance, that the Promiſe in the Text does belong to us, and will be fulfilled in us; *Thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret himſelf ſhall reward thee openly.*

For which glorious Reward, God of his infinite Goodneſs fit and prepare us all, by making *us* perfect in every good Work to do his Will, *and* working in *us* that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, *thro'* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord*; *to whom, &c.*

THE

THE NECESSITY AND ADVANTAGES OF Secret PRAYER.

DISCOURSE XLVI.

The Neceſſity and Advantages of Secret Prayer.

MATTH. vi. 5, 6.

And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are; for they love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men: verily I ſay unto you, they have their Reward.

But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.

OUR Lord, in the firſt Verſe of this Chapter had caution'd us not to do our *Alms*, or rather (according to the Reading that is in ſeveral *Greek* Copies, and in ſome very ancient Tranſlations, and which I am inclined to think is the true Reading of the Place, not to do) our *Righteouſneſs*, *i. e.* not any of our good Works before Men, to be ſeen of them; aſſuring us, that if we do ſo, *i. e.* if we deſign our own Honour and Reputation by any good thing which we do, we ſhall have *no Reward* for it of our *Father which is in Heaven.*

And becauſe there are no Acts of Righteouſneſs, by which Men are ſo apt, or ſo

ſo likely to ſeek their own Praiſe and Credit, as by Alms, and Prayer, and Faſting; he then proceeds, in the following Verſes, to apply this general Caution to theſe three particular Caſes: 1. To our *Alms*; in the 2d, 3d, and 4th Verſes, of which I diſcours'd the laſt Time: *Therefore when thou doeſt thine Alms, do not ſound a Trumpet before thee*, &c. 2. To our *Prayers* in the 5th and 6th Verſes: *And when thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that that they may be ſeen of Men*, &c. And at laſt to our *Faſting*, in the 16th, 17th, and 18th Verſes: *Moreover when ye faſt, be not as the Hypocrites, of a ſad Countenance; for they diſfigure their Faces, that they may appear unto Men to faſt*, &c.

The ſecond of theſe is the Subject which I am at this Time to diſcourſe of: *And when thou prayeſt, &c. ---- openly.*

In which Words our *Saviour* firſt cautions his Diſciples againſt ſeeking their own Praiſe and Glory by thoſe Offices of Religi-

ous Worſhip, which ſeem to be, and which, according to the *Nature* of them, ought to be directed immediately to God. And,

Secondly, As a Duty oppoſite to this Hypocritical Shew of Devotion, and as a Means of preventing all Hypocriſy in our Addreſſes to God, our *Saviour* here directs us to put up our Prayers to God in a quite contrary Manner than the Hypocritical *Jews* did: that whereas they choſe the moſt publick Places to put up their Prayers, in the Synagogues and the Streets, we ought to ſeek for the greateſt Privacy; that whereas they deſired and endeavoured to be ſeen by others at their Devotions, we ought to ſhun and avoid this as much as is poſſible: not only not uſing any Artifice to make our Devotions taken Notice of; but, on the contrary, making it our Concern and Buſineſs to contrive our Prayers ſo very privately and ſecretly, that it may be impoſſible for any to know them, but God only: *But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to*

to thy Father which is in ſecret; and withal he aſſures us, that theſe private Addreſſes to God ſhall turn to very good Account to us: that the Fruit and Reward of ſuch ſincere and undiſſembled Piety ſhall be as publick and viſible to all, as the Manner of exerciſing and expreſſing it was private and reſerv'd; *Thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly.*

I ſhall ſpeak ſomewhat of each of theſe. I begin with the firſt.

I. The Caution here given by our *Saviour* to his Diſciples againſt ſeeking their own Praiſe and Glory by thoſe Offices and Exerciſes of Religious Worſhip, which ſeem to be, and which, according to the Nature of them, ought to be directed immediately to God; which is a Fault that many People are guilty of, and for which the Hypocrites, which our *Saviour* takes notice of in the Text, were very notorious; who, that they might be ſure to be ſeen of Men, and not fail of getting the Reputation of great Piety and Devotion, choſe the moſt publick Places they could

find for the putting up ſome of their private and ſingle Prayers: *When thou prayeſt*, ſays he, *thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men.* And concerning theſe, our *Saviour* here ſays, that *they have their Reward.*

When thou prayeſt. It is not here directed, or commanded, that we ſhould ever put up any Prayers to God; but 'tis ſuppos'd here, by our *Saviour*, that this is a Duty, and that Men are generally ſo perſuaded of the Neceſſity of it, that they cannot be ſatisfied in their own Minds while they live in the Neglect thereof: and 'tis indeed a Duty taught ſo clearly by the Light of Nature, that there was no need that it ſhould be enjoined by any poſitive Precept; and therefore we do not find, that in the Law of *Moſes* there is any Precept commanding this Duty: notwithſtanding which, it was nevertheleſs carefully and conſtantly practis'd, both before the Law and under the Law, by all good Men. And the Neceſſity and the Reaſo-

Reaſonableneſs thereof was ſo very evident to all, and there was ſuch a perfect Concurrence and Agreement in Judgment among Mankind in this Notion, that God ought to be worſhipp'd and prayed to by all his Creatures, whom he had endued with Reaſon and Underſtanding capable to look up to God, and to diſcern him to be the Author of their Being, and the Giver of all good Things; that as it was always conſtantly practis'd by good Men out of Conſcience, ſo it was (at leaſt as to the outward Act and Expreſſion of it) no leſs conſtantly practiſed by all other Men who had any Regard to their own Credit; and, whatever they really were, yet were not willing to be deemed and accounted Atheiſts. Even the *Hypocrites* here ſpoken of by our *Saviour*, who, to be ſure, had no true Fear of God, or Senſe of Religion, were not wanting in the Practice and Exerciſe of this Duty, tho' they err'd and fail'd in the right Manner of performing it. They prayed as much, and as often; nay, perhaps oftner, and longer, than the beſt Men did. Shall it not then be

better, even for theſe Hypocrites, in the other World (and yet our *Saviour* ſays of them, that they have their Reward, in that Credit and Reputation which this goodly Shew of Religion procures them in this World, and ſo muſt expect no other Reward hereafter; ſhall it not, I ſay, nevertheleſs, be better, and more tolerable, even for theſe Hypocrites) at the Day of Judgment, than it will be for many amongſt us who call themſelves Chriſtians; and yet are ſo clearly deſtitute of the Power of Godlineſs, that they have not ſo much as any thing of the Form and Shew of it? Will not, not the *Jews* only, but the *Gentiles* alſo, riſe up in Judgment againſt us, and condemn many of us who call our ſelves by the Name of *Chriſt*, and profeſs our ſelves his Diſciples? For they, very few among them, tho' they had no expreſs Precept commanding this Piece of Divine Worſhip, were yet ſo remarkably deficient in this Duty of Prayer, as a great many are among us; who being ſeldom, or never, to be ſeen at the publick Devotions, may, I think, without Uncharitableneſs,

ritableneſs, be preſum'd to be at leaſt as much wanting in the private Exerciſe of this Duty. And yet we are taught this Duty, not only as they were, by the Light of Reaſon, but by the cleareſt Revelation; there being no Duty of Religion more plainly, more expreſſly, more frequently taught in the *New Teſtament*, than this of Prayer is. For we are taught by our *Saviour* to *watch and pray always*, Luke xxi. 36. to *pray always, and not to faint*, Luke xviii. 1. and by the Apoſtle St. *Paul*, *Rom.* xii. 12. to *continue inſtant in Prayer*; to *pray always, with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit*, Eph. vi. 18. and *watching thereunto with all Perſeverance*, Coll. iv. 2. to *continue in Prayer*, to *pray without ceaſing*, 1 *Theſ.* v. 17. and *in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving*, to *let* our *Requeſts be made known unto God*, Phil. iv. 6.

But to ſpeak more of this Point at preſent would be too great a Digreſſion from the Text, which, as I ſaid before, does not preſcribe or command this Duty of Prayer,

Prayer, but ſuppoſes it; and only gives Direction how to perform it, in ſuch a manner that it may be acceptable to God, and profitable and available to our ſelves: *When thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are.*

One thing more only I think proper to note concerning the Subject Matter of this Caution, and of the following Precept, *When thou prayeſt, thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites,*——but *thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet*, &c. namely this; that we are not to conceive that our *Saviour* meant this Caution, and the following Direction, only concerning *Petition*, which is what is properly meant by the Word Prayer: but he takes the Word Prayer here in a large Senſe, meaning thereby any way or manner of addreſſing our ſelves to God; whether it be in Confeſſion, or Adoration, or Thankſgiving; as well as in Petition: for all theſe are commonly meant to be comprehended under the Word Prayer, and they are uſually reckon'd as parts of Prayer. So that, *when thou prayeſt*, is all one as if

it

it had been ſaid, when thou addreſſeſt thy ſelf to God in any ſolemn Act of Worſhip. And,

When thou doeſt this, ſays our *Saviour*, *thou ſhalt not be as the Hypocrites are, for they love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men.* In which Words, our *Saviour* blames in theſe Hypocrites, and cautions his Diſciples againſt theſe two things.

1. And chiefly he blames them for their aiming and deſigning to get Praiſe and Applauſe, and Credit to themſelves, by the outward Performance of the Duties and Exerciſes of religious Worſhip. And, 2. For their affecting and chuſing to perform theſe Exerciſes of religious Worſhip in ſuch a manner as they thought moſt conducing to this End.

1. The thing which our *Saviour* chiefly blames in the Hypocrites, and cautions his Diſciples againſt, is the aiming and deſigning to get Praiſe and Applauſe, and Credit

Credit to themſelves, by the outward Performance of the Duties and Exerciſes of religious Worſhip. *They love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men.*

And this indeed was very vile and groſs Hypocriſy, highly deſerving the harſheſt Judgment which could be given upon it. For ſuch Hypocriſy as this, is, in ſome Reſpects at leaſt, more wicked and abominable even than Idolatry it ſelf. For he who profeſſedly directs his Worſhip to that which is indeed an Idol, and not God, tho' he highly deſerves Blame, for robbing God of his Honour, and giving the Glory which is due to him only, to another; yet his Sin is not commonly grounded upon Miſtake and Ignorance; he would not worſhip a falſe God, but only that he knows not the true God. But he who is an Hypocrite in his Addreſſes to God, does in Effect the ſame thing which the Idolater does, and can't pretend Ignorance in his Excuſe; for at the ſame time that he ſeems to be worſhipping God, he is in truth worſhipping Men, and making his Court

Court to thoſe who are the Spectators of his Shews and Appearances of Devotion. While he would ſeem to be begging ſome Favour of God, he in good truth only means to beg the Favour and Applauſe of Men; while he would be thought to be imploring the Bleſſing and Protection of Heaven, God is then the leaſt in all his Thoughts: and they are not heavenly Bleſſings which he in truth deſires; for the things which he ſeems to deſire, he has indeed no Value or Eſteem for, no Concern whether he obtains them or not: but while one Eye ſeems directed to Heaven, the other looks askew round about him, to ſee who obſerves him; and the By-ſtanders are the Gods he worſhips; 'tis their Praiſe and Applauſe only which he ſeeks for, 'tis their good Word and good Will in which he places all his Happineſs. And yet, as I ſaid, tho' he is thus an Idolater, he is not ſo thro' Ignorance, for by that ſame Method which he takes to obtain Commendation from Men, *viz.* by making ſhew of great Piety and Devotion towards God, he clearly ſhews that he

he knows who is God, and in what manner he ought to expreſs his Worſhip and Devotion towards him; he wants nothing to make him a true Worſhipper, but only to be ſuch inwardly as he appears to be outwardly; and by endeavouring to ſeem to be ſuch an one as he ought to be, he makes it evident that he knows his Duty, though he makes no Conſcience to practiſe it.

Of ſuch Hypocrites as theſe, therefore, 'tis no wonder that our *Saviour* here ſays, that *they have their Reward*; for this is all which even the beſt Men can expect from their devout Addreſſes to God. If they receive all which they ask for, and every thing which they deſire, they have as much Fruit of their Devotion as they could expect: and there is certainly no Reaſon that the Hypocrite ſhould receive more. The good Word and Applauſe of Men being therefore all which he deſires and ſeeks for, when he has obtain'd this he ought to be content with it; for there is no Reaſon to expect that God ſhould reward him for thoſe Prayers, or other Expreſſions of Devotion,

votion, which were not addreſſed to him, but to the Multitude; there is no Reaſon he ſhould expect any Reward from God, who himſelf deſired none, but only from the People: there is no Reaſon for him to look to receive ſpiritual or heavenly Bleſſings, as the Fruit of thoſe Petitions, by which he himſelf meant to ask for nothing, but only that he might be well thought of, and well ſpoken of by Men: for to have any other Reward but this, would be to have more than he himſelf did deſire. But,

2. Another thing which our *Saviour* here blames in the Hypocrites, and cautions his Diſciples againſt, is the affecting and chuſing to perform the Exerciſes of religious Worſhip, in ſuch a manner as is moſt conducing to this End: they *love*, ſays our *Saviour*, *i. e.* they affect, they chuſe, *to pray in the Synagogues*, *i. e.* in Places of greateſt Concourſe; *and in the Corners of the Streets*, *i. e.* in ſuch Places where three or four Streets meet together; ſo that all which they do may be taken

taken notice of by all who are paſſing in all thoſe Streets. *They love to pray ſtanding in the Synagogues, and in the Corners of the Streets, that they may be ſeen of Men.*

There was not any Hurt merely in their being ſeen of Men; for Religion is not a thing which we ſhould be aſhamed of: nay, 'tis what we ought, upon all proper Occaſions, to make open and publick Profeſſion of. But their Fault was, that they affected to be ſeen of Men; that they made no Difference between publick and private Religion; that their private Devotions were as open as their publick Prayers; or rather, that having no other Deſign, but only to commend and approve themſelves to Men, they were more frequent than perhaps was needful in the publick Exerciſes of Devotion, neglecting in the mean time, and wholly omitting the ſecret Exerciſe of it. And therefore,

II. As a Duty oppoſite to this hypocritical ſhew of Devotion, and as a Means of preventing all Hypocriſy in our Addreſſes

dreſſes to God, our *Saviour* here directs us to put up our Prayers, to make our Confeſſions, to offer up our Thankſgivings to God, in a quite contrary manner than the hypocritical *Jews* did; that whereas they choſe the moſt publick Places for this Purpoſe, we ought to ſeek for the greateſt Privacy; that whereas they deſired and endeavoured to be ſeen by others at their Devotions, we ought to ſhun and avoid this as much as is poſſible; not only not uſing any Artifice to make our Devotions taken notice of, but, on the contrary, making it our Concern to contrive our Prayers ſo privately, and ſecretly, that it may be impoſſible for any to know them but God only: *But thou, when thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet, and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret.* In which Words it was not, as I have already intimated, our *Saviour*'s Deſign to condemn or forbid publick Prayer, in its proper Seaſon, and when there is Convenience and Opportunity for it. For this is a Duty plainly enough commanded in other Pla-

ces of holy Scripture, and even by our *Saviour* himſelf, who has alſo encourag'd the careful Practice thereof by a Promiſe of extraordinary Bleſſings; *for when two or three*, ſays he, *are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midſt of them*; and by the *Author* to the *Hebrews*, *Heb.* x. 25. it is given in ſtrict Charge to thoſe *Chriſtians* to whom he writes, that they ſhould by no means *forſake the aſſembling of themſelves together for* religious Worſhip, *as the manner of ſome then was*; who tho' they were Chriſtians in their Hearts, yet for fear of Perſecution declined the open and publick Profeſſion and Exerciſe of their Religion: and by the Connexion of theſe Words with thoſe immediately following at the 26th and enſuing Verſes, it appears that they who neglect to join with the Aſſemblies of faithful *Chriſtians* in the Exerciſes of Chriſtian Devotion, are little better than Apoſtates from Chriſtianity, and have Reaſon to fear the ſame Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which ſhall devour the Adverſaries thereof.

And

And according to this Rule our *Saviour* himſelf practiſed, who, tho' he here blames the Hypocrites, becauſe they *loved* to pray in the Synagogues, (ſuppoſing that thereby he meant the Places ſet apart in every Town and City for publick Worſhip;) yet was himſelf a due frequenter of thoſe Places: for thus 'tis obſerved by St. *Luke*, Ch. iv. ℣. 16. that being at *Nazareth* on the Sabbath-Day, which was the Day of the publick Aſſemblies, *he went into the Synagogue:* and 'tis farther remarked, that this was not an extraordinary thing, which he did only that time, or was uſed to do but now and then, but that it was his conſtant Cuſtom to do ſo; *as his Cuſtom was, he went into the Synagogue on the Sabbath-Day.*

And the ſame *Evangeliſt* likewiſe notes, that this ſame was alſo the conſtant Practice of the Apoſtles, and firſt *Chriſtians*, that they took all Occaſions of joining both with the *Jews*, and with their Fellow *Chriſtians*, in publick Prayers, and Acts of divine Worſhip. Thus he notes in particular concerning *Peter* and *John*,

that they *went up into the Temple to pray, at the Hour of Prayer*, Acts iii. 1. And 'tis not probable that they went thither alone; it is moſt likely they were accompanied thither by the other Apoſtles, and all the new Converts to Chriſtianity: and becauſe the Miracle upon the lame Man, the Relation of which follows after in that Chapter, was wrought by them only, it was then ſufficient to mention only them by Name; for of all the Apoſtles, and other Proſelytes to the Chriſtian Faith, he had obſerv'd before at the 46th ℣. of the foregoing Chapter, that *they continued daily with one Accord in the Temple*; and at ℣. 42. that *they continued ſtedfaſtly in the Apoſtles Doctrine and Fellowſhip, and in breaking of Bread and in Prayers.*

It is plain therefore that it was not our *Saviour*'s Deſign in theſe Words, *when thou prayeſt enter into thy Cloſet*, to forbid publick Prayer, but only to command private Prayer. So that from this, and other Places of Scripture compared together, it is evident that both are Duties, and

and both alike neceſſary Duties; and conſequently that the Practice of either of them alone, is not ſufficient to excuſe us in the Neglect of the other.

And when our Prayers and Devotions are deſign'd to be publick, with, and for others, then the more publick they are the better; for the more Company there is to join in them, ſo much the more exemplary they are, ſo much the more do they tend to the Advancement of God's Honour, and the Credit of Religion, and ſo much the ſurer we are to obtain our Requeſts. And, for this Reaſon, the moſt publick Prayers in the Church may very juſtly be preferred before leſs publick Prayers in the Family; which indeed, I think, could not be judged neceſſary at all, if there were in all Places Opportunity of meeting frequently enough in the Church for publick Worſhip; and if every Perſon of every Family could be ſpared from home to aſſiſt at it. But on the other ſide, when we pray by our ſelves, and make ſecret Confeſſions or Petitions to God, then the more private and ſecret they are,

ſo much the better; for the End of private Prayer is beſt anſwer'd by the greateſt Privacy: ſo that a *Synagogue*, whether we underſtand thereby a Place deſigned for publick Worſhip, or (as the Word properly ſignifies) any Place where there is a great Confluence of People, is by no means a proper Place for ſuch Devotions; and the *Corner of a Street* is more improper ſtill. *When thou prayeſt*, ſays our *Saviour*, *i. e.* when thou thus prayeſt, when thy Confeſſions, or Petitions, or other Addreſſes to God, are private and peculiar to thy ſelf, then make choice of the moſt ſecret Retirement; then *enter into thy Cloſet, and ſhut thy Door to thee.*

Which Phraſes, *enter into thy Cloſet*, and *ſhut thy Door*, are not to be underſtood ſtrictly and literally, but according to their equitable Meaning. For it was not certainly our *Saviour's* Deſign to confine our ſecret Devotions juſt to a Cloſet, or to a private Chamber, or to any certain Apartment in the Houſe; neither was it his Meaning to lay it upon us as a part of Duty, that we ſhould never pray in ſecret

cret otherwiſe than with *the Door ſhut* upon us: but all which he meant, was, that we ſhould be as private and ſecret in our Prayers by our ſelves as is poſſible; and that when we pray alone to our Father in ſecret, we ſhould, ſo far as we can, let none but our Father, which is in ſecret, know of it: for a Cloſet, or private Room, is a Convenience of retiring to alone, which a great many may not have, and which ſome, I am afraid, would be glad that they had not, if the Want of it would ſerve to excuſe them for the Omiſſion of the ſecret Exerciſes of Devotion. But he, who has no Cloſet to retire to, may eaſily find ſome other Place of Privacy, either within Doors, or without; and whenſoever he either can retire from others, or happens to be left alone by others; then, whatever Place it is which he is in, that is his Cloſet; and if he be ſure that he is not over-ſeen, nor over-heard by any, that is a proper Seaſon for him to make his private Addreſſes to God.

In a word, the thing here deſigned by our *Saviour*, was to oblige us to the ſe-

cret Exerciſe of Piety and Devotion. And therefore, what Time now remains, I ſhall ſpend in endeavouring to perſuade you to the diligent Practice of this Duty; which I ſhall do, by briefly laying before you the Neceſſity and ſome of the manifold Advantages thereof. And,

1. It may be conſidered, that there are ſome of the Ends of Prayer and Devotion which cannot be attained otherwiſe than by the ſecret Practice thereof; for there are ſome Sins which it may be we have been guilty of; which, if they were committed in ſecret, and are not known, 'tis better the World ſhould not be made acquainted with: for to do that, would be only to make thoſe Sins ſcandalous, and of ill Example, by the Publication of them which were not ſo in their firſt Commiſſion. Such Sins as theſe, therefore, tho' we may and ought to have an Eye and Reſpect to in our Thoughts, when we join in ſuch a general Confeſſion of Sins as is proper to be uſed in an Aſſembly; yet we cannot then dwell ſo long upon them in

in our Minds, reflecting ſeriouſly upon all the aggravating Circumſtances thereof, as may be neceſſary to work in us a hearty Sorrow and Contrition for them: here therefore private Confeſſion is neceſſary. And ſo, likewiſe, it is neceſſary that the publick Petitions, deſigned to be put up by a Company of People, ſhould be ſo framed, as that all who are preſent may join in them; but beſides thoſe Bleſſings, ſpiritual or temporal, which all do ſtand in need of, every Man has his ſpecial Grievances, or his peculiar Wants, which he cannot any way lay open before God but by private Petition; and therefore, that he may make known theſe Requeſts to God, it is neceſſary that he ſhould ſometimes enter into his Cloſet, and pray to his Father in ſecret.

Moreover, beſides thoſe Bleſſings and Benefits which are beſtowed by God upon the whole Community, and for which 'tis fit and reaſonable that they ſhould all join together in common Thankſgiving to their great and bountiful Benefactor; there is no Man living who has not great Reaſon to

to be thankful to God upon his own Account, for ſundry Gifts and Benefits beſtowed ſingly on himſelf alone, or for ſome great Deliverances granted to himſelf only; and we ſhall be ungrateful to God, if we do not (ſo far as we can recollect) return him our hearty Thanks for every Fruit and Expreſſion of his Bounty and Goodneſs to us. And this likewiſe makes ſecret Thankſgiving to God neceſſary, as well as publick; becauſe, tho' it be very proper for every one to own and declare publickly the Goodneſs of God towards himſelf, and that Thanks ſhould be given by all for the Mercies beſtowed on any of the Community; yet in publick and common Thankſgivings this can be only done in general, becauſe the particular Enumeration of all the Benefits which every ſingle Member thereof hath receiv'd, would draw out the publick Offices to ſuch a Length as would be intolerable. To avoid which Inconveniency, it is therefore neceſſary that every one in private ſhould make a diſtinct Addreſs of Thanks to God on his own Behalf; in which he may take time,

to

to dwell ſo long in his Mind upon the Conſideration of God's Goodneſs to him, till his Heart be filled with Love and Thankfulneſs to his gracious Benefactor.

Thus it appears, that our conſtant Attendance upon the publick Worſhip (if we did always attend it as conſtantly as we ſhould do) would be no Reaſon or Excuſe for our omitting private Worſhip, this being plainly as neceſſary as that, and together with it. For the farther Proof of which, it may be conſider'd in the ſecond Place,

2. That as in ſome Reſpects the publick Worſhip of God is more excellent than private Worſhip; ſo this does, in other Reſpects, excel that: and therefore 'tis not fit that either of them ſhould put by the other.

The publick Worſhip indeed is better than the private, as it is more glorious to God, and of better Example to others; but the private Worſhip is better than the publick, as it is a plainer Teſtimony of our Belief of God's Omniſcience; for this

is

is the only Foundation of our ſecret Prayers and Addreſſes: we may pray in publick for Form and Cuſtom Sake, or for ſome worldly End, as the Hypocrites do; but we can have no reaſon to make private Prayers to God, which we are ſure no other Perſon in the World knows any thing of, unleſs we firmly believe that our Father which is in Heaven ſees us in ſecret, and underſtands perfectly the Devotion of our Hearts. And for a Man who does not believe this, who is not fully perſuaded that God ſees him in ſecret, to put up private Prayers to God, would be ſuch Folly as it can hardly be ſuppos'd any Creature, endued with the leaſt Grain of Reaſon or Underſtanding, ſhould be guilty of.

And beſides; as the Worſhip of God in ſecret is founded upon a Belief of God's Omniſcience, ſo the conſtant Exerciſe of it is naturally apt to increaſe this Belief in us, and to make the Senſe of it always lively and preſent in our Minds; than which, there is nothing that can probably be more effectual to reſtrain us from all Sorts of Sin, and eſpecially from thoſe Sins which Men

are,

are, of all others, moſt liable and eaſy to be tempted to; I mean ſecret Sins: from the Commiſſion of which, if the ſerious Conſideration of God's Omniſcience does not reſtrain them, nothing elſe can.

3. As a farther Motive to ingage us to the conſtant Diſcharge of that Duty of private Worſhip which we are here exhorted to, it may be conſider'd, that nothing can ever be pleaded ſo juſtly in Excuſe for the Omiſſion of our private Exerciſes of Devotion, as there may be ſometimes for the Omiſſion of our publick Worſhip.

For the publick Worſhip being neceſſarily fix'd to certain Times and Places, it may happen, that a Perſon who is very religiouſly and devoutly diſpoſed, may be ſometimes hinder'd or diſabled from attending it juſt then and there; and ſo having miſſed that Opportunity, muſt be forced to wait ſome while for another, and can never recover again the Opportunity which was once loſt. But our private Devotions being nor fix'd to Time or Place, and there being nothing neceſſary or eſſential to them,

them, but only Privacy and Frequency, if we cannot find Privacy in one Place, we may ſeek and find it in another; and if we cannot find Leiſure for it this Hour, we may the next; and it being indifferent, in what Place, or at what Time we pray, if we miſs one Opportunity we may quickly have another: and tho' we happen at any time to be hinder'd from our private Devotion, at our accuſtomed Hour, we ſhall not need for that Reaſon to omit our Devotion wholly, or to make any Abatement in the Number or Length of our Prayers.

Beſides, it may be that a devout Soul, who would be heartily glad, as the *Pſalmiſt* was, to hear the Voice of thoſe who ſhould ſay to him, *come, let us go into the Houſe of the Lord*, Pſal. cxxii. 1. to worſhip; it may be, I ſay, that he may live in an Heathen Countrey, where there may be none to join with him in publick Worſhip: or it may be his Hap to live in a corrupt Church, whoſe publick Offices of Worſhip may be ſo mix'd with Error, or Superſtition, that he can't with a good Conſcience

Conſcience communicate with it. And in theſe Caſes, becauſe there is no Opportunity of publick Worſhip, the Omiſſion of it can in him be no Fault; but where-ever a Man's Lot is caſt, in what dark Corner of the World ſoever it be his Hap to live, he may yet, as *Daniel* did in the Captivity at *Babylon*, worſhip God in his own Chamber *three times a Day*, Dan. vi. 10. or more; ſpending as much more time extraordinary, in his private Devotions, as ſhould have been ſpent, if he had lived elſewhere, in the Offices of publick Worſhip.

4. Another Motive to the conſtant Practice of this Duty of ſecret Worſhip, may be taken from the great Comfort and Conſolation which the due and conſtant Performance thereof muſt needs yield to our own Minds.

For there is nothing in this World which can in Reaſon be ſo great a Comfort to us, as a good Aſſurance of our own Sincerity. *Our rejoicing is this*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *the Teſtimony of our Conſcience*; *that in Simplicity*,

Simplicity, and godly Sincerity, we have had our Converſation in the World. And I know nothing which can give us a better Aſſurance of our own Sincerity, than the conſtant Exerciſe of ſecret Piety and Devotion.

For ſuch is the Deceitfulneſs of our own Hearts, that we can very hardly ever be ſure of our own Uprightneſs and Integrity in any other Act or Exerciſe of Religion or Virtue; for thus, for Inſtance, if we are juſt in our Dealings, we may think it is Conſcience which makes us ſo, when yet perhaps, if the Practice of Fraud and Deceit were free from Shame and temporal Puniſhments, and were a ſure way to thrive in the World, Conſcience alone would not have been ſufficient to reſtrain us from unjuſt Dealing. And ſo again, if we are temperate in the Uſe of Meats and Drinks, we may be apt to conceit that we are ſo, only becauſe Temperance is a Duty, when yet perhaps the Care of our Bodies, and a Concern for their Health, may influence us more ſtrongly than the Motive of Religion: and when we are mov'd to

the ſame thing both by a ſecular and by a religious Motive, it may be impoſſible for us to diſcern which of them moved moſt powerfully; and the ſame may be ſaid in all other Caſes, and eſpecially in Works of Mercy and Charity, and in the publick Exerciſes of religious Worſhip; for the Practice of theſe has ſuch a manifeſt Tendency to gain us a good Name and Reputation in the World, and it is ſo natural to us to deſire the good Word and fair Eſteem of others, that it will be very hard for us to be ever certainly aſſured of the Sincerity of our own Aim and Intentions, in the outward Practice of any Virtue which is honourable, and of good Report.

But in the Practice of ſecret Piety and Religion, and in the Judgment which we form of our ſelves from thence, I think we can be liable to no ſuch Miſtake; for he who devoutly worſhips God in ſecret, and who is conſtant in the Diſcharge of this Duty, when he is ſure that no Eye ſees him but only God's, and when he is reſolved never to give the leaſt Intimation thereof to others, what Deſign can it be

imagined he can have in this, but only to commend himſelf to God. For being certain that no body knows what he does when in private, but God only, and being reſolved that no body ever ſhall know it from him, what other Motive can he poſſibly have to the conſtant and devout Exerciſe of this Duty, but only an hearty Reverence of God, and an earneſt Deſire to obtain his Grace and Favour? And if this be the only Motive to his ſecret Religion, and if there be no Poſſibility that then ſhew'd any Mixture of ſecular Deſign and Intereſt in it, I think he cannot reaſonably entertain any Doubt of his own Sincerity; but unleſs his own Conſcience accuſes him of Inſincerity, (which in this Caſe, I think, can hardly be;) he may be ſecure of himſelf, and may both live in Peace, and die with Comfort; neither of which he can do, if he be failing in the Practice of this Duty.

5. And laſtly; it may be farther conſidered, that the devout and conſtant Practice of this Duty of ſecret Worſhip, entitles

tles us to a ſure and certain Reward from God in the other World.

For the Practice of this Duty hath the ſame Title by Promiſe to the Rewards of the other Life, which the ſincere Practice of other Graces and Virtues hath; and in Equity and Reaſon hath a better Title to a future Reward, than almoſt any other good Work whatſoever. I ſay,

1. It hath the ſame Title, by Promiſe, to the Rewards of the other Life, which the ſincere Practice of other Virtues and Graces hath; for there is no Virtue or Grace, to which the Happineſs of the other World, and a high Degree of Happineſs, is any where in Scripture more clearly promiſed, than it is in the Text, to the Practice of this Duty. *When thou prayeſt, enter into thy Cloſet; and when thou haſt ſhut thy Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret; and thy Father, which ſeeth in ſecret, ſhall reward thee openly.*

Now the open Reward of ſecret Piety can be only in the other World; becauſe

however it may be rewarded by God in this World, the good things which God beſtows upon any Man in this Life, upon that Account, cannot be known to be the Reward of his ſecret Piety; becauſe his Piety it ſelf is ſecret, and known only to God. The open Reward therefore here promiſed to them who pray in ſecret, muſt be at the Reſurrection of the Juſt, and at the Day of Judgment, when the Secrets of all Hearts ſhall be reveal'd.

And, 2. If this had not been expreſſly promiſed, it is no more however than what might reaſonably be expected; there being (if ye will allow of the Expreſſion, and in a ſober Senſe I think it may be allow'd; there being, I ſay,) a greater Obligation lying on God, to reward this Grace, than any other Virtue or Grace whatſoever; this having (as I ſaid before) in Equity and Reaſon, a better Title to a future Reward, than perhaps any other good Work. And the Reaſon is this, becauſe almoſt every other Virtue or Grace hath ſome Reward in this World, little or much, but

but this hath none at all; I mean, it has none which Men can ſay is the Fruit and Reward of it. For he who performs other Acts of Piety and Devotion, Juſtice or Charity, which are ſeen and known by others, tho' he be never ſo ſincere in the Practice of them, and has not the leaſt Deſign or Intention to approve himſelf to Men thereby, yet will be at leaſt as ſure of gaining a good Reputation by theſe things, as the Hypocrites, who do them only with that Deſign. And of them our *Saviour* ſays, that *they have their Reward*, in that Honour and Eſteem which their outward ſhew of Piety and Virtue procures to them. And this Fame and good Reputation, which is the natural Conſequence of virtuous and good Actions, tho' it be indeed but a ſmall thing; tho' it be but a mere Trifle, not fit to be compared with the greater Reward which God has promiſed; yet however it muſt be allow'd to be worth ſomething, it muſt be granted to be of ſome Value.

Foraſmuch therefore as all other Virtues and Graces are thus in part recompenced

in this World, if not otherwiſe, yet at leaſt by a fair and honourable Eſteem, from thoſe who are Witneſſes thereof: and foraſmuch as this is not capable of that Recompence, becauſe being practiſed in ſecret, it has no Witneſſes but God only; it plainly follows that this has a better Title to the Rewards of the other World than any of them; becauſe, unleſs it be rewarded there, it will have no viſible Reward at all.

And theſe Conſiderations will, I hope, be ſufficient to engage us all to the conſtant and conſciencious Practice of this Duty, of the ſecret Worſhip of God; for I have ſhewn, that the ſecret Worſhip of God is every whit as neceſſary a Duty as the publick Worſhip; that as the publick Worſhip is in ſome Reſpects better than the private, ſo the private is in other Reſpects better than the publick; that there never can be any juſt Reaſon or Excuſe for our Neglect of private Worſhip, as there may ſometimes be for the Omiſſion of publick Worſhip; that there is no Duty of Religion from the Exerciſe whereof we receive

ceive ſo great Conſolation, and good Aſſurance of our own Sincerity and Integrity, as from this; and laſtly, that there is no Duty for which we are more ſure to be greatly rewarded.

The plain Concluſion therefore from all, is this, not that we ſhould neglect the publick Worſhip, when there is Time and Opportunity for it; but that we ſhould not content our ſelves with that alone; that we ſhould pray always, and at all Times; in publick, becauſe then Men do ſee us, and our publick Devotion is a good Example; and in ſecret, becauſe then Men do not ſee us, and our ſecret and Cloſet-Prayers are an Aſſurance and Security to our ſelves. *I will that Men pray every where*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *lifting up holy Hands*. And *when thou prayeſt*, ſays our *Saviour*, *enter into thy Cloſet, and, when thou haſt ſhut the Door, pray to thy Father which is in ſecret, and thy Father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly*. So much for this Time.

Of VAIN
REPETITIONS.

DISCOURSE XLVII.

Of vain Repetitions.

MATTH. vi. 7, 8.

But when ye pray, uſe not vain Repetitions, as the Heathen do; for they think that they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them, for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

IN theſe Words there is a Fault in Prayer noted and caution'd againſt, *When ye pray, uſe not vain Repetitions*; and two Reaſons whereby that Caution

is enforc'd: 1. Becauſe to do ſo is *like the Heathens, who think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking:* and, 2. Becauſe *our Father knoweth what things we have need of before we ask him.*

My chief Buſineſs will be to enquire into the Nature of that Fault in our Prayers, or other Addreſſes to God, which we are here caution'd againſt; and in the handling of that Point I ſhall have Occaſion to ſay as much as I ſuppoſe will be needful concerning the Reaſons whereby the Caution is enforc'd.

When ye pray, uſe not vain Repetitions. The Words in the Original are Μὴ βαττολογήσητε, *Do not ſpeak after the manner that* Battus *us'd to ſpeak.* But who this *Battus* was, or what his way and manner of ſpeaking was, is ſomewhat uncertain. *Ham. in Loc.*

Some ſay he was a Poet, who made long Hymns conſiſting of many Lines full of Tautologies.

Others ſay, that he was the *Battus* ſpoken of by *Ovid*;

——*ſub*

——*ſub illis*
Montibus, inquit, erant, & erant ſub
montibus illis.
Ovid. Metam. l. ii. ℣. 703.

who being ask'd by *Mercury* where the Cattel were, which *Mercury* himſelf under another Shape had juſt before ſtollen away, made Anſwer, *There they were under that Mountain; there they were under that Mountain*; needleſly repeating the very ſame Words twice over. And,

Others there are, who think this *Battus* was a Stammerer; and you know the way of thoſe, who ſtammer in their Speech, is to repeat one Syllable three or four times over, before they can get out the reſt of the Word.

The Etymology of this Word, or rather the Reaſon of its Etymology, being therefore ſo uncertain, the ſureſt way, I think, to underſtand what is meant by it here, will be by conſidering the Context. And here it may be obſerv'd,

1. That

1. That the *Battology* in Prayer, which is here condemn'd, was a Fault which the *Jews* were not (at leaſt not commonly, not very remarkably) guilty of; but which was very notorious in the Prayers of the *Heathens*; Do not *Battologize* in your Prayers, ſays our *Saviour*, *as the Heathen do.* It ſeems then that the *Heathens* did ordinarily in their Prayers to their Gods, as *Battus*, whoever he was, was wont to do.

Now of the *Jews*, 'tis obſerv'd by thoſe that are well skill'd in the *Jewiſh Antiquities*, that their Prayers were for the moſt part very ſhort and conciſe: and, on the contrary, 'tis obſerv'd of the *Heathens*, that they uſed to repeat the ſame Words many times over in their Prayers; an Example of which is produc'd out of *Æſchilus*, the Tragedian, who has near an hundred Verſes at a time made up of nothing but Tautologies. [ἴω, ἴω· φεῦ, φεῦ, and ἔ, ἔ, repeated over and over again] And the Scripture itſelf has furniſh'd us with an Example of this, in the Worſhippers

pers of *Baal*, ſpoken of in 1 *Kings* xviii. 26. Who, tho' indeed *Jews* by Nature, were yet *Heathens* in their Practice, becauſe *they forſook the Lord, and worſhipped ſtrange Gods, after the Manner of the Heathens that were round about them.* Of theſe *Jews* then, or rather of theſe *Heathens*, it is obſerv'd in that place, that they ſpent the whole Time, from Morning until Noon, with doing nothing elſe but repeating over and over again; *O Baal, hear us*; *O Baal, hear us.* This therefore was *Battology*; this was to do as *Battus* did, as the *Heathens* did, and as *Chriſtians* ought not to do.

2. It may be farther obſerv'd, that the ſame Fault, which at the Beginning of this ſeventh Verſe is call'd *Battology*, is in the laſt Clauſe of it call'd *Polylogy*. *They think*, ſays our Saviour, *that they ſhall be heard*, ἐν τῇ πολυλογίᾳ. Now, Πολυλογία is a Word of plain, and eaſy, and more certain Signification, being compounded of πολὺς, which ſignifies much; and λόγος, which ſignifies Speech: ſo that this Word ſignifies,

fies, without all Diſpute, as 'tis render'd in our Tranſlation, much Speaking; *they think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.*

Foraſmuch therefore as the *Battology* in Prayers, condemn'd and forbidden at the Beginning of the Verſe, is undoubtedly the ſame with the *Polylogy* ſpoken of at the latter Part of the Verſe, it is evident, in general, that the Fault which our *Saviour* here blames in the *Heathens*, and cautions his Diſciples againſt, conſiſted in a needleſs multiplying of Words, in ſpeaking Words to no Purpoſe, or in uttering Abundance of Words to little Purpoſe: They affected to ſpeak more in their Prayers to God than was needful or proper to be ſpoken.

3. The Reaſon here given why the *Heathens* did affect and uſe ſuch Abundance of Words in their Prayers, may ſerve yet farther to help us to underſtand what was that *Battology* in Prayer which our *Saviour* here blames them for. *They think*, ſays our Saviour, *that they ſhall be heard for their*

their much ſpeaking. They ſeem to have thought, not only that their Gods were ignorant of their Needs till they were informed by them what things they wanted; but likewiſe, that they were ſo dull and ſlow of Apprehenſion, that there was Danger they would not underſtand the Wants and Deſires of their Supplicants, unleſs they were curious and exact in expreſſing their Meaning fully; or elſe, that they were ſo void of Goodneſs and Compaſſion, and ſo little inclined to do Kindneſs to Men, that there was little Hope of receiving any Favour or Benefit from them, unleſs they were mightily urg'd, and in a manner forc'd to it, by mere Importunity: or elſe, laſtly, that their Gods might be ſometimes out of the way, or aſleep, or ſo otherwiſe taken up and employ'd, that it was poſſible that many of thoſe Prayers, which they did put up, might never come to their Knowledge. And therefore, to make ſure Work of it, they continued their Prayers to an unreaſonable Length, tho' they had nothing to ſay, but only the ſame things over and over again; for they

thought, that tho' the God they prayed to might perhaps be at too great a diſtance, or aſleep, or otherwiſe buſy'd the laſt Hour, he might poſſibly be nearer at hand, or more wakeful, or more at leiſure this Hour; or if not this, the next; or if not the next, the Hour after. And therefore, not knowing certainly when it would be that he would or could hear their Petitions, they continued repeating and renewing them over and over again for a long while together. Thus did *Baal*'s Prieſts, before ſpoken of; they called upon their God *Baal from Morning until Noon*, repeating ſtill the ſame Words; *O Baal hear us: but there was no Voice, nor any that anſwer'd.* And when upon this, *Elijah* ſcoffingly ſaid to them; *Cry aloud, for he is a God; either he is talking, or he is purſuing, or he is in a Journey, or peradventure he ſleepeth, and muſt be awak'd,* ℣ 27. They ſeem to have taken his Jeſt in Earneſt; what he ſpake ſcoffingly, they ſeem to have thought he had ſpoken ſeriouſly; and they ſeem alſo to have apprehended, that there was ſome Truth

and

and Reaſon in what he had ſaid; for immediately thereupon, (tho' 'tis likely they were weary and hoarſe with crying ſo long together before) they renewed their Cry, and ſtrained their Voices ſtill louder; and thus they continued to do till Evening: *they cried from Mid-day until the Time of the offering of the Evening Sacrifice*, ℣. 28, 29. as they had done before from Morning until Noon: and yet what they cried all this while, was only, *O Baal, hear us.* So that they ſeem to have ſuppoſed, that if their God was talking ſome part of the Day, 'twas likely that at ſome other Hour he would have his Ears open to hear them, eſpecially when they cried ſo loud; that if he was purſuing at firſt, he might afterwards be return'd from the Purſuit; that if he was in a Journey in the Morning, he might poſſibly be come home by the Afternoon; or that if he was aſleep ſome part of the Day, he would not ſleep all the Day long: and becauſe they knew not certainly when he would be at liberty to hear, that they might be ſure not to miſs the proper Opportunity, they continued to

repeat the ſame Cry; *O Baal, hear us*, for a whole Day together. Thus they thought to have been heard for their *much Speaking*.

4. The Reaſon here given why the Worſhippers of the true God ſhould not imitate the *Heathens* in their *Battology*, may likewiſe ſomewhat help us to underſtand what that *Battology* was, which we are here caution'd to avoid; *be not ye like unto them*, ſays our Lord, *for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him*. In which Words, the Aſſurance we have of the Knowledge and Goodneſs of God is given as a Reaſon why we ſhould not affect to multiply Words more than needs when we are praying to him. *He knoweth what things ye have need of*: therefore, what occaſion can there be for your telling him over and over again of your Wants? And he is *your Father*, *i. e.* as ready to do you Good, as a Father is to do Good to his Child; ſo that there is no Need of uſing Motives or Perſuaſives, or Rhetorical Flouriſhes, to move him to Compaſſion: or thus; *he* always *knows what*

what you want, and *he is* always *diſpos'd to grant you what is for your Good:* and therefore you ſhall not need to multiply Words, by mentioning to him every particular thing which you think would contribute to your Happineſs; but 'tis enough to expreſs only in general your Dependence upon him, your Truſt in him, and your Deſire of his good Will towards you; leaving it to him, who knows what is good for you better than you your ſelves do, to do you good in ſuch Manner as he knows to be beſt.

Conſidering therefore that the *Battology* here condemn'd was ſuch as the *Heathens* were guilty of, who uſed to ſpend much Time in ſaying over and over again the ſame Words. Conſidering likewiſe, that it is the ſame thing which our *Saviour* himſelf, at the latter Part of the Verſe, calls *much Speaking*. Conſidering alſo, that it was ſuch a Fault as they were led into by a Miſtake about, or a Diſ-belief of the Knowledge or Providence of God. And conſidering, laſtly, that it is ſuch a Fault as they can hardly fall into, who

believe that God is their Father, and that he bears a Fatherly Regard to them, and knows what they have Need of before they begin to ſpeak; I think 'tis plain, that whoever that *Battus* was, from whom this Word was form'd, or whatever his Practice was which is here alluded to, the thing here meant to be forbidden can be nothing elſe but only a needleſs multiplying of Words in Prayer, *i. e.* the ſtretching out of Prayers to an unreaſonable Length by cold and lifeleſs Petitions, or uſeleſs and ridiculous Tautologies: and perhaps it could not be rendred in *Engliſh* better than 'tis in our Tranſlation: *when ye pray, uſe not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do, who think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking.*

And from what has been already ſaid in general upon this Subject, we may, I believe, be enabled to underſtand both what is not, and what is here meant by that *vain Repetition* and *much Speaking* in Prayer which our *Saviour* here cautions againſt.

1. What

I. What is not meant to be hereby forbidden. And,

1. 'Tis certain that our *Saviour* did not hereby mean to forbid us to continue our Prayers to a good Length, in caſe we have many Requeſts to make to God, or many Sins to confeſs, or many Bleſſings and Benefits to give Thanks for, provided that our inward Devotion laſts as long as our Prayers, and that we do not continue a Lip-Service to God after our Heart is gone elſewhere.

In general, indeed, very great Length in Prayer may with good Reaſon be caution'd againſt, becauſe many times, when *the Spirit is willing the Fleſh is weak*; and unleſs it be upon an extraordinary Occaſion, or when our Hearts are raiſed up to a more than uſual Pitch of Devotion, it will be hard to make a very long Prayer without much Wandring, without frequent Tautologies, without a great Mixture of cold and lifeleſs Petitions which are nothing worth. But, as long as the inward

Devotion laſts, there can be no Hurt in continuing the outward Expreſſions of it. The Lips can never move too long in Prayer, ſo long as the Heart moves with them. We can no more ever pray too long, (if indeed we do pray while we ſeem to be at Prayer) than we can have too much Devotion, or too much Thankfulneſs, or too much Senſe of our own Guilt and Unworthineſs, or too earneſt a Deſire to obtain the Divine Grace and Mercy.

And that it was not merely Length in Prayer which our *Saviour* meant, when he blamed the *Heathen* for their *much Speaking*, appears plainly by his own Example, which was in all Points conformable to his Teaching; for of our Lord himſelf we read, *Luke* vi. 12. that on a certain Occaſion (it ſeems, by what follows, that it was in order to procure the Divine Grace and Benediction upon thoſe whom he was the next Day to appoint to the Apoſtleſhip) *he went out into a Mountain, and continued all Night in Prayer to God.* And what we are told he did then, it is not improbable he did at other Times:

Times: and therefore, 'tis what we likewiſe may do when there is Occaſion, and when it can be done without Neglect of other Duties, and when our Heart is inflam'd with great Devotion. We may alſo ſpend a whole Night, or a whole Day, in Prayer, if our Hearts and our Lips can ſo long keep Company together without tranſgreſſing this Precept; *uſe not vain Repetitions* in your Prayers, *as* they *do who think they ſhall be heard for their much Speaking.*

2. It is alſo certain, that when our *Saviour* here forbids us to uſe *vain Repetitions* in Prayer, he did not mean to forbid us to put up very frequently the ſame Requeſts to God; becauſe this is what he has, by himſelf and his *Apoſtles*, elſewhere frequently commanded: for to this Purpoſe are thoſe Precepts of the *Apoſtle*, Col. iv. 2. *continue in Prayer:* Rom. xii. 12. *continue inſtant in Prayer:* Eph. vi. 18. *pray always with all Prayer and Supplication in the Spirit, and watch thereunto with all Perſeverance*: and,

1 *Theſ.*

1 *Theſ.* v. 17. *pray without ceaſing.* For how is it poſſible that we ſhould diſcharge theſe Precepts, commanding continual and inceſſant Prayers, without very frequently putting up the ſame Requeſts? And that our *Saviour* meant we ſhould do this, that we ſhould ask again and again for the ſame thing, till we do obtain it, appears plainly by his own two Parables; that of the *Loaves*, and that of the *unjuſt Judge*. The former of which is in *Luke* xi. 5. *which of you ſhall have a Friend, and ſhall go unto him at Midnight, and ſhall ſay unto him, Friend, lend me three Loaves, for a Friend of mine in his Journey is come to me, and I have nothing to ſet before him? And he from within ſhall anſwer and ſay; trouble me not, the Door is now ſhut, and my Children are with me in Bed; I cannot riſe and give thee. I ſay unto you, tho' he will not riſe and give him, becauſe he is his Friend; yet, becauſe of his Importunity, he will riſe and give him as many as he needeth.* And then follows the Application of the Parable in an Exhortation to us to uſe the like Importunity

portunity in our Prayers to God, not forbearing to renew our Petitions, until we receive a gracious Anſwer. *And I ſay unto you, ask and it ſhall be given you, ſeek and ye ſhall find, knock and it ſhall be open'd unto you.* The other Parable, that of the *unjuſt Judge*, is in *Luke* xviii. 2. &c. *There was in a City a Judge, which feared not God, neither regarded Man: and there was a Widow in that City, and ſhe came unto him, ſaying; avenge me of my Adverſary: and he would not for a while; but afterward he ſaid within himſelf, Tho' I fear not God, nor regard Man, yet, becauſe this Widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt, by her continual Coming, ſhe weary me.* And then follows the Application, ℣. 6. *And the Lord ſaid, hear what the unjuſt Judge ſaith; and ſhall not God avenge his own Elect, which cry Day and Night unto him, tho' he bear long with them?* And this Parable, we are told by the *Evangeliſt*, our Lord ſpake to this very End, *that Men ought always to pray, and not to faint*; i. e. that they ſhould

ſhould not ever be diſcouraged; that they ſhould not give over asking, tho' their Prayers be not preſently anſwer'd.

3. It is likewiſe certain, that the Deſign of our Lord in this Place, where he blames the *Heathens* for *vain Repetitions* and *much ſpeaking* in their Prayers, and commands his Diſciples *not to be like unto them*, was not to forbid us, when we have the ſame Petition to offer up again to God, to do it in the ſame Words.

For the Deſign of our expreſſing our Wants to God in Prayer, is not to ſhew our Eloquence, or the Copiouſneſs of our Style, or our Skill in varying Phraſes; but partly to excite our own Devotion, and partly to make publick Profeſſion of our Faith and Truſt, and Dependence upon God. And if theſe Ends may be attain'd as well by uſing the ſame Form as by varying it, there is no need of our troubling our ſelves to find out new Words and Phraſes, to expreſs that Senſe of our Minds, which we have already learn'd how to expreſs as fully and properly, and affectio-

affectionately, as by any other Words or Phraſes which we can deviſe.

And to ſuppoſe that God will not as readily anſwer our Requeſts, if we continue to repeat them in the ſame Words, as he would do if we expreſs'd our ſelves every time in a new way, is to ſuppoſe, either that he is not ſo wiſe and knowing, or not ſo good and gracious as he is repreſented to us in Scripture, and as we are taught by the Light of Nature to believe him to be. For if God knows the Meaning of thoſe Words and Phraſes which we do already uſe, and are affected by, (as moſt certainly he does, for he knows even our Thoughts;) what need is there of varying the Phraſe? To ſpeak the ſame thing over again, in other Words, is never neceſſary, but when we conceive that the Words which we uſed before were not well underſtood by the Perſon to whom we ſpake them: and if our own Hearts are as much affected by that Form of Speech which we have already uſed, as 'tis likely they would be by a new one; to ſuppoſe that God will not grant the ſincere

cere and fervent Deſire of our Hearts, and give us ſuch things as he knows we want, and depend upon him for, only becauſe we ask them in the ſame Words which we have us'd to ask them in, is to ſuppoſe him nothing near ſo good and gracious to us as an earthly Father is to his Children: for I am very ſure he would not be accounted a kind and loving Father to his Children, who ſhould deny them Neceſſaries, and ſuffer them to periſh for Want, unleſs they did every Day ask for ſuch things as they wanted, in a different Phraſe from any, which they had uſed before. Nay, farther,

4. Laſtly; 'tis certain it was not our *Saviour*'s Deſign, in this his Prohibition of *vain Repetitions* in Prayer, to forbid us ever to repeat the ſame Requeſt a ſecond or third time ſoon after the firſt; or if we do, to oblige us not to do it then in the ſame Words which we did before. For what is there more frequent than this in the Book of *Pſalms*? How often, for inſtance, are ſeveral Requeſts of the *Pſalmiſt*

miſt repeated, and very near in the ſame Words, in the cxix^th *Pſalm*? I will inſtance at preſent only in one Petition, (tho' I might inſtance in many more,) *Teach me thy Statutes.* This Petition the *Pſalmiſt* puts up firſt at the 12th ℣. *Bleſſed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy Statutes*; and the very ſame Petition we meet with again a ſecond time, and in the very ſame Words, at the 26th ℣. a third time at the 64th ℣. a fourth time at the 68th ℣. a fifth time at the 124th ℣. and a ſixth time at the 135th ℣. And the very ſame Petition, in Words very little different from theſe, we meet with more than twice as often in the ſame *Pſalm*. So that here is the ſame Petition put up more than twenty times in one *Pſalm*, which yet may be read all over in a quarter of an Hour. And in the cvii^th *Pſalm*, conſiſting in all but of 43 Verſes, and which may be all recited in three or four Minutes, there is one Petition repeated, and in the very ſame Words, no leſs than four times, *O that Men would praiſe the Lord for his Goodneſs, and for his wonderful Works*

Works to the Children of Men. And in the cxxxvi^th *Pſalm*, conſiſting but of 26 Verſes in all, and thoſe very ſhort ones too, the Mercy and Goodneſs of God is celebrated, and thankfully acknowledged by the *Pſalmiſt*, no leſs than ſix and twenty times, *viz.* at the end of every Verſe, and always exactly in the ſame Words; *for his Mercy endureth for ever. O give Thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever. O give Thanks unto the God of God's, for his Mercy endureth for ever. O give Thanks to the Lord of Lord's, for his Mercy endureth for ever, &c.* Here are Repetitions in Abundance, at leaſt half the *Pſalm* nothing elſe but a Repetition of the ſame thing, ſix and twenty times; and yet moſt certainly they were not *vain Repetitions*, which were utter'd by a Man ſo full of true Devotion as the *Pſalmiſt*; nor can we think them ſo, if we believe that he ſpake as he was *moved by the Holy Ghoſt.*

Nay, that our *Saviour* did not mean this by the *Battology*, or *vain Repetitions*, which he here condemns, appears evidently

vidently from his own Example, which was in every thing conformable to his Precepts; for when he himſelf was in his Agony in the Garden, he prayed the ſame Prayer, and in the very ſame Words, no leſs than thrice in the ſpace of one Hour, as you may ſee, *Matth.* xxvi. 39th, 42d, and 44th Verſes.

From all which it plainly appears, that the Practice which our *Saviour* here condemns in the *Heathens*, and forbids in his Diſciples, is not merely the continuing, upon ſome Occaſions, Prayer to an unuſual length, or the frequently putting up the ſame Requeſts, or the often uſing the ſame Form, or the expreſſing the ſame Senſe, or uſing the ſame Words more than once in the ſame Prayer, or in the ſame Office of Prayer. Theſe indeed may be call'd *Repetitions*, but when they are the Effect of true Devotion, or are accompany'd thereby, they are not *vain Repetitions*, nor conſequently ſuch as are here forbidden; *uſe not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do.*

II. But what then, you'll ask, are thoſe *vain Repetitions*, what is that *much ſpeaking* in Prayer, which our Lord condemns? I anſwer,

1. We may then be ſaid to ſpeak much, to ſpeak too much in our Prayers to God, when we affect to continue our Prayers to ſuch a certain length, when we ſet our ſelves ſuch a Task, and are reſolv'd to go through with it, whether our Hearts be devoutly affected or not. For Prayer is not ſpeaking, but deſiring. We may pray acceptably, without ſpeaking a Word; and we do ſo, when we only breathe forth the Deſires and Affections of our Souls towards God. The only Uſe of Words in Prayer is either to excite and quicken, and fix our own Deſires; or elſe to let others know what things they are which we deſire of God, that ſo they may join with us in the ſame Deſire: and while we ſpeak, whether it be much or little, if our Hearts move with our Lips, ſo long we are at Prayer; but when once we leave off

off attending to what we ſay, and ceaſe to be inwardly affected thereby, tho' we ſtill continue upon our Knees, uttering Words in the Form of a Prayer, and are reſolv'd to do ſo till the time is expired which we had before allotted for the length of our Devotion; all which we ſay afterwards is either *vain Repetition*, or impertinent Babbling, neither acceptable to God, nor profitable to our ſelves. And to believe that the Continuance of our Lip-Service is pleaſing to God, is plainly the Fault which the *Heathens* were guilty of in their Prayers, who *thought they ſhould be heard for their much ſpeaking.*

2. We ſpeak too much in our Prayers to God, when we are too particular in our Petitions for *earthly Bleſſings*: we ought indeed, as our *Saviour* teaches us, to beg for our *daily Bread*; *i.e.* in general, for all ſuch things as we have need of for this Life, and to depend upon the Goodneſs and Providence of God for a Supply of them; but to enumerate to God every particular little thing which

we think will be for our Good, and eſpecially to be very urgent and importunate for it; to preſcribe, as it were, to God, in what manner he ſhould expreſs his Goodneſs, is certainly one of the Faults which we are here warn'd againſt: becauſe to do thus, is an Argument either that we do not believe that God knows what we want, unleſs we take Care to inform him fully; (contrary to what our *Saviour* here ſays, that *he knoweth what things we have need of, before we ask him*;) or elſe that he does not know in what manner our Wants may be beſt ſupply'd, and our Happineſs moſt promoted, ſo well as we do: which is ſuch an Affront offer'd to the divine Wiſdom, as may juſtly render ſuch Prayers not only unacceptable, but odious and abominable to God.

3. Another thing which ſeems to have been meant to be hereby forbidden, is too much ſtudying for rhetorical and ornamental Forms of ſpeaking in our Prayers to God; as if we thought that he was very

ry averſe and backward in himſelf to do us any Good, but that however by good Words and fair Speeches, and rhetorical Perſuaſions, he might poſſibly be prevail'd with to grant us what we deſire.

So far indeed, as proper and affecting Words and Expreſſions are uſeful, to excite and keep up Devotion in our own Minds, or to enkindle the ſame in the Minds of thoſe who are to join with us in Prayer, (ſo far, I ſay,) we may ſtudy for Words. And 'tis a Fault in Prayers, eſpecially in publick Prayers, to have them drawn up and expreſs'd ſo coldly and flatly, that it is not likely that thoſe who are to join with us in them ſhould be affected by them. But that's all the End we are to aim at in our Care about Words, *viz.* only to chuſe ſuch as may beſt ſerve to affect our ſelves and others, and to ſtir up in our own and their Minds thoſe devout Deſires which we expreſs towards God. But to think to move God by verbal and ſtudyed Eloquence, is to think him like a weak and ſhallow Man, who ſees not fully into the Truth of things, and ſo

by an eloquent Speech or Addreſs may be moved to do that, which if it had been propos'd to him in plain Expreſſions, and nakedly repreſented, he would have diſcern'd was not fit for him to do.

4. Laſtly; there are ſome ſorts of Repetitions, and Tautologies in Prayers, which are manifeſtly condemned by our *Saviour* in this Place; *viz.* ſuch as the *Heathens* us'd, who ſpent a long time in ſaying over and over again juſt the ſame Words; like the Prieſts of *Baal*, before ſpoken of, who firſt continued from Morning till Noon, and after that from Noon till Evening, in juſt the ſame Cry, *O Baal hear us, O Baal hear us.* And ſuch alſo ſeem the Tautologies us'd by the *Papiſts*, in their manner of praying by *Beads*; by telling over which they keep Account of the exact Number of the *Ave Marys*, *Pater-noſters*, and *Creeds* which they ſay over; and the whole Bead-Roll (as 'tis ſaid) is made up by 63 *Ave Marys*, 7 *Pater-noſters*, and one *Creed*. For ſuppoſing that the *Ave Mary*, *i. e.* the Salutation of

of the Angel to the bleſſed Virgin, were a Prayer to God, (which yet it manifeſtly is not;) yet is it not plainly ridiculous to repeat this as a Task 63 times in a ſhort ſpace of time, and the *Lord's Prayer* 7 times in the ſame ſpace, and to keep an exact Account by their Beads how often they ſay them? For what can they mean by this, but to think to pleaſe God by much ſpeaking, by a certain Tale or Number of Prayers, by a certain ſpace of time ſpent in Lip-Service, which, becauſe they know not how to fill up with new Matter, they are forc'd to repeat the ſame thing over and over 63 times together? I believe there was not ordinarily any thing in the Prayers and Worſhip of the *Heathens*, more abſurd and ridiculous, or more truly *Tautology* than this.

In a Word; the Fault of the *Heathens*, here reproved and condemned by our *Saviour*, was not, I ſuppoſe, merely their expreſſing the ſame Deſire, or their expreſſing their Deſire in the ſame Words, twice or thrice, or oftner, in a ſhort Compaſs of Time; but it was in their repeat-

ing over the ſame Words, when they had not the ſame inward Deſires; in multiplying Words without Attention or Devotion, and with no other Deſign but only that they might continue their Prayers to ſuch a certain length. It was not ſo much the Repetition it ſelf which was blameable, as the ill Cauſe moving them to it; not ſo much the thing they did, as the End they had in the doing it.

For the *Pſalmiſt* (as I noted before) frequently repeats the ſame Words in the ſame *Pſalm*, (and therefore, be ſure, in the ſame Office of Devotion,) twice, thrice, or oftner. And our Lord himſelf ſaid the ſame Prayer, in the ſame Words, no leſs than three times in the Compaſs of one Hour. Here therefore was Repetition, but it was not *vain Repetition*, becauſe the Deſire and inward Devotion was repeated as often as the Expreſſion. But the Reaſon why the *Heathens* us'd ſuch Repetitions was, either becauſe they thought God was pleas'd with mere length of Prayer, *they think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking*; or becauſe they could

could not tell whether God had heard them at their firſt ſpeaking, and ſo thought it neceſſary to ſpeak the ſame thing again; or becauſe they thought their Gods were ſo backward to do them good, that they would not do it till they were in a manner forc'd to it by the Importunity of their Supplicants. And whenever theſe, or any other Reaſons of the like kind, (implying want of Knowledge, or of Goodneſs in God,) are the Reaſons either of the length of our Prayers, or of our making any Repetitions therein, we may juſtly be thought to tranſgreſs this Precept, *uſe not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do, who think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking; for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.* But no length in Prayer can be condemn'd as too great, no *Repetitions* in Prayer can be condemn'd as *vain*, which are not contrary to theſe Reaſons here given by our *Saviour* to enforce his Precept, *i. e.* which are not grounded upon a Diſtruſt either of the Knowledge or Goodneſs of God.

And

And what has been ſaid upon this Subject may, I ſuppoſe, be ſufficient to anſwer an Exception which has been made by ſome to the Liturgy of our Church, who have thought that the Compilers of it had not ſufficient Regard to the Rule here given by our *Saviour*; becauſe the *Lord's Prayer*, and *Gloria Patri*, are us'd more than once conſtantly in the ſame Office of Morning or Evening Prayer, and oftner, at ſuch times as the Litany and Communion-Service are likewiſe us'd.

And it muſt be granted that theſe are vain Repetitions, if they are repeated without Attention, without Fervour, without Devotion; nay, indeed the only once ſaying over any Prayer may truly be ſaid to be vainly repeating it, if the Mind does not move with the Lips, and the Soul does not breathe forth thoſe pious Affections or Deſires which the Words do expreſs. But on the other ſide; if as often as we repeat the ſame Expreſſion of Deſire or Thanks, or Praiſe, or other Act of Devotion towards God, we are indeed ſo affected inwardly as our Words ſeem to ſignify; and

and eſpecially, if (as 'tis noted by St. *Luke* [xxii. 44.] concerning our *Saviour*, when, being in his Agony in the Garden, he repeated the ſame Prayer three times; if, I ſay,) the ſecond time that we put up any Petition to God, we pray more earneſtly than we did the firſt, and the third time than the ſecond, that can by no means be accounted a *vain Repetition*, by which our own Devotion is more enflam'd and encreas'd. And I can ſee no Reaſon why we may not as well uſe the *Lord's Prayer* (provided that we do it devoutly and affectionately) twice, thrice, or oftner, in that one Office of Prayer which takes up but an Hour, as we might within the ſame ſpace of Time have us'd it as often, in Caſe the Office had been diſcontinued; nor why we may not very frequently give Glory to God in that excellent Doxology call'd *Gloria Patri*. When we do it as often as we can, we do not do it ſo often, and ſo much as we ſhould do, had we greater Leiſure from other neceſſary Employments; and it would be beſt of all if we, while on Earth, could be as wholly

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and as conſtantly employed in this excellent Exerciſe as the glorified Saints and Angels in Heaven are, of whom we are told, *Rev.* iv. 8. that *they reſt not Day or Night, ſaying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.*

Thus I have endeavour'd to explain the Meaning of the Caution here given us; *when ye pray, uſe not vain Repetitions, as the Heathens do:* and, in diſcourſing on this Point, I have likewiſe ſpoken ſufficiently of the Reaſons whereby this Direction is enforc'd; *they think to be heard for their much ſpeaking*; and *your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him.*

But this laſt Reaſon; *for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him*, may perhaps be thought by ſome to prove too much, more than our *Saviour* here meant to prove by it; *viz.* not only that it is needleſs to lengthen out our Prayers with *Repetitions* and *Tautologies*, but that 'tis likewiſe altogether needleſs, ever to make any Prayers to God

at

at all. For if it be ſo, as our *Saviour* here ſays, that God is *our Father*, and that, bearing a Fatherly Affection to us, he is ever ready of his own Accord to do us Good; and if he alſo *knows what things we have need of before we ask him*, what need we ever put up any Requeſts to him at all? He who knows our Wants, has no need to be told of them; and he who is always ready to ſupply them, has no need to be urg'd and ſollicited to do that thing which of himſelf he is willing to do. And if ſo, then all the Time and Labour which we beſtow in Prayer, is only ſo much Time and Labour loſt; and we had better beſtow them in ſome other Employment which is more neceſſary, or which will turn to better Account to us.

And therefore, before I leave this Subject, I think it will be needful to remove this Objection againſt the Duty of Prayer in general; which I ſhall endeavour to do in a few Words, and ſo conclude. And,

1. 'Tis alone a ſufficient Anſwer to this Objection, to ſay that Prayer is by the Will

Will of God, who may appoint what Conditions he pleaſes, made the Condition of our obtaining thoſe Things which we ſtand in need of. God has commanded us to pray; and that's Reaſon enough for it, if we had no other. And St. *James* tells us expreſſly, that the Reaſon why we have not, is *becauſe we ask not:* and our *Saviour* has promis'd, that *if we ask, we ſhall receive*; that *if we ſeek, we ſhall find*; and that *if we knock, it ſhall be open'd unto us.* But,

2. It was likewiſe very reaſonable that Prayer ſhould be made the Condition of our obtaining good Things from God. For tho' God, indeed, needs not be told our Wants, it is, nevertheleſs, very fit that we our ſelves ſhould be ſenſible of them, and of our whole Dependence upon God for the Supply of them. And this is Prayer; this is what we think and meditate upon when we are at Prayer, or elſe we do not think to the Purpoſe.

Again, tho' God needs no Words of ours to move him to do us good, yet it is

ſo

ſo much our Duty to own and declare, that our only Hope and Truſt is in him, (which is what we do by Prayer) that if we neglect to do this, it may not be agreeable to his Wiſdom to beſtow that Good upon us which he is willing to beſtow; becauſe, ſhould he give it us without our asking, we ſhould not ſee ſo clearly who is our Benefactor; we might be apt to attribute the good Things which we receive to Chance or Fortune. But when we are in Want of any thing, and can get our Want ſupply'd only by Prayer; and when, upon our Prayer to God, we do receive the Things which we have need of; this ſhews us the Author of them, and excites our Gratitude to him, and teaches us to depend upon him for the time to come. When we receive any good thing in Return of our Prayers, 'tis then natural to receive it as a Gift from God; which, had it been given us without our asking, we ſhould not have acknowledg'd as an Expreſſion of God's Goodneſs to us. Moreover,

3. It

3. It may be conſider'd farther, that the End of Prayer is not only to obtain, by the Gift of God, the good Things which we pray for, but likewiſe to work in our ſelves pious Affections and hearty Devotions towards God, and an Endeavour to comply with the Operations of the Divine Spirit, and to put us upon uſing ſuch Means as are proper, or appointed to be us'd by us, for the obtaining of thoſe Things which we deſire: and theſe Effects it has an Aptneſs by natural Efficacy to produce in us. So that Prayer is plainly a neceſſary Duty, not only as a Condition of obtaining God's Bleſſing to us, but alſo as a Means of working in us thoſe good Diſpoſitions of Mind which may make us fit to receive his Bleſſing. And,

4. Laſtly, It may be conſider'd farther, that Prayer is good in itſelf, and would be for our own Advantage to practiſe, tho' there were no Promiſe made to it by God. For when we pray to God, we do actually exerciſe our Faith and Hope in his Goodneſs

Goodneſs and Promiſes: we do thereby eaſe our ſelves, by caſting our Care upon God; we do thereby teſtify to others the Senſe we have of his Riches and Bounty; we do thereby work in our ſelves a juſt Value and Eſteem of thoſe Things which we deſire of him. And laſtly, we are thereby moſt effectually reſtrain'd from all ſuch wicked Enterprizes or Deſigns, as we can't with Reaſon expect God ſhould bleſs and ſucceed, as we can't, without great Impiety, ſo much as pray to God that we may proſper in.

And what has been thus briefly ſaid, may, I hope, be ſufficient to ſhew the Neceſſity and Reaſonableneſs of Prayer, and fully to ſatisfy us, that tho' God, our heavenly Father, knows our Wants better than we do our ſelves, and ſo has no need to be told them by us for Information Sake; yet Prayer is ſuch a Condition of our receiving Good from God as was very fit for God to require, and is very reaſonable for us to comply with.

That God knows our Wants, is no Reaſon why we ſhould not own them to him; and that he is ready to ſupply them, is no Reaſon why we ſhould not put up our Requeſts to him to have them ſupply'd; but rather they are both very good Encouragements to us to be conſtant in the Diſcharge of this Duty; they are both very good Reaſons why we ſhould *in every thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, let our Requeſts be made known unto him*, in a full Aſſurance, that *if we ask we ſhall receive*, that *if we ſeek we ſhall find*, and that *if we knock it ſhall be open'd* unto us; for this is the Promiſe which we have of God in Chriſt, that *if we ask any thing according to his Will, he heareth us.*

I can't, I think, conclude this Diſcourſe better, than with a good Collect of our Church.

Let thy merciful Ear's, O Lord, be open to the Prayers of thy humble Servants; and that they may obtain their

their Petitions, make them to ask ſuch things as ſhall pleaſe thee, thro' Jeſus Chriſt our Lord; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghoſt be all Honour and Glory now and for ever. Amen.

THE DESIGN, *Matter*, and *Form* OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

DISCOURSE XLVIII.

The Deſign, Matter and Form, of the Lord's Prayer.

MATTH. vi. 9.

After this Manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

OUR Lord having in the foregoing Verſes caution'd us againſt ſeeking Glory to our ſelves in our Addreſſes to God, and againſt ekeing out our Prayers to God

with vain Repetitions and much Speaking, as if we thought either that God was pleas'd with a Multitude of Words, or that he did not, nor could, underſtand our Needs, unleſs we were very copious and particular in declaring them; continues his Diſcourſe concerning Prayer ſtill farther in the Text and following Verſes, by preſcribing a Form of Words very proper to be uſed as a Prayer to God; and to which alſo, as to a Pattern, we ought to have Regard in all the other Prayers which we make to him. And this is what we commonly call *The Lord's Prayer*. *Our Father which art in Heaven*; *hallowed be thy Name*, &c.

But before I come to treat of the Prayer itſelf, I think it may be proper to premiſe ſome Things.

Here therefore I ſhall diſcourſe ſomewhat,

I. Concerning the *Occaſion* of our Lord's dictating this Prayer to his Diſciples.

II. Con-

II. Concerning the general *Deſign* of it.
III. Concerning the *Matter* of it. And,
IV. Concerning the *Frame* and *Compoſure* of it.

I. Concerning the *Occaſion* of our Lord's dictating and preſcribing this Prayer to his Diſciples.

And here we may obſerve, that this very ſame Prayer, with only ſome ſmall Variation, is recorded by two of the *Evangeliſts*, St. *Matthew* and St. *Luke*; by St. *Matthew* here, and by St. *Luke* in the xi^th^ Chapter of his Goſpel, at the 2^d^ and following Verſes. And, according to the Account which theſe *Evangeliſts* give of it, it ſeems to have been dictated by our Lord upon two very different Occaſions.

For here, in St. *Matthew*, this Prayer is brought in as a Part of that one continued Diſcourſe of our Lord, called his *Sermon upon the Mount*, which takes up three whole Chapters, and ſeems to be deliver'd at once, without any Break or Interruption; and in which our *Saviour* has compriz'd the whole Sum and Subſtance

ſtance of the practical Part of the Chriſtian Religion. And what ſeems here to have given Occaſion to his preſcribing this Form or Pattern of Prayer, was the Caution which he had juſt before given his Diſciples to avoid that affected Prolixity in Prayer, which the *Heathens* were remarkable for, who ſeem to have *thought that they ſhould be heard for their much ſpeaking*. The Vanity whereof, when he had ſhewed at the 8th Verſe, by the Conſideration of the Goodneſs and Knowledge of God; *your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him*; he then, as a farther Proviſion and Security againſt that Fault, dictates to them this ſhort, but comprehenſive Prayer, as a Pattern, according to which, if they were but always careful to form their own Prayers, they would be ſure not to fall into it. For this Connexion of theſe Words with the foregoing is imply'd in the Word *therefore: be not ye like* unto the *Heathens*, who uſe *vain Repetitions* in their Prayers, and *think they ſhall be heard for their much ſpeaking:* For *your Father*

ther knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him. After this Manner therefore pray ye; Our Father which art in Heaven, &c. *i. e.* be your Prayers ſhort, full and conciſe, as this is.

But in the xi^th^ Chapter of St. *Luke*, where we meet again with this Prayer, it is not brought in as a Part of the *Sermon upon the Mount*; (for *that*, if it be any where at all recorded by St. *Luke*, is in the vi^th^ Chapter of his Goſpel; where, indeed, we meet with many Paſſages, agreeing not only in Senſe, but in Words and Expreſſions too, with ſeveral Paſſages in this Sermon; but neither is there any Mention made there of this Prayer) nor is it any where elſe recorded by St. *Luke* as a Part of any other ſet and continued Diſcourſe of our *Saviour*. But the Occaſion of our Lord's then dictating this Prayer to his Diſciples, is at the 1^ſt^ Verſe of that xi^th^ Chapter of St. *Luke*, expreſſly noted to have been this: *It came to paſs, that as he was praying in a certain Place, when he ceaſed, one of his Diſciples ſaid unto him; Lord teach us to pray, as John*

John alſo taught his Diſciples. And then it follows, ℣. 2. *And he ſaid unto them; when ye pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven,* &c.

Here then are two clearly different Occaſions, noted by theſe two *Evangeliſts*, of our Lord's dictating this Prayer. Once he did it of his own Motion; and the other time he did it at the Requeſt of one of his Diſciples: once he did it as he was Preaching, and, as it ſeems too, in the middle of his Sermon; and the other time he did it as he was praying, I mean, immediately after he had finiſhed his own Prayer; one of his Diſciples taking Occaſion from thence to deſire him to teach them alſo how to pray. And laſtly, once he did it at the Beginning of his Miniſtry; for 'tis here recorded by St. *Matthew*, as a Part of the firſt Sermon that he made after he had called to himſelf ſome Diſciples: and the other time he ſeems to have done it in the middle of his Miniſtry; (probably in the ſecond, or perhaps in the third, Year of his Preaching) for there are many things recorded

corded by St. *Luke*, as ſpoken and done by him before this.

So that however we can't be certain of the exact time, or times, when our Lord did dictate this Prayer, (becauſe the Order of Time is not always nicely obſerv'd by the *Evangeliſts*; for many times what one relates as done before, another relates as done afterwards;) yet thus much, at leaſt, ſeems very clear from what has been already ſaid; that this very ſame Prayer (at leaſt ſo far as 'tis the ſame in both the *Evangeliſts,)* was dictated by our Lord to his Diſciples more than once.

And from hence we may reaſonably infer, both the abſolute Perfection of this Form of Prayer, and alſo our ſtrict Obligation both to uſe the ſame as a Prayer, and alſo to compoſe whatever other Prayers we make according to this Pattern.

And this leads me to the next thing which I propounded to diſcourſe ſomewhat of, *viz.*

II. The

II. The general *Deſign* of our Lord's teaching his Diſciples this Prayer. And that ſeems to be twofold.

1. He ſeems to have deſign'd it as a *Pattern* of Prayer, according to which they ſhould compoſe their own Prayers, ſo as to avoid needleſs Prolixity; and ſo, alſo, as to preſent their Requeſts to God in the moſt grave, moſt eaſy, moſt familiar, and moſt devout Expreſſions. *After this manner pray ye*, ſays our *Saviour* in the Text: pray *after this manner*; that is, let your Prayers to God be always ſuch as this is; for Subſtance the ſame, for Compoſure like to this which I now dictate to you.

And thus our Lord's Diſciples ſeem at firſt to have underſtood him; *viz.* as only giving them a Pattern of Prayer, not as preſcribing to them the Uſe of this particular Form. But that he had a farther Deſign in it, is evident, *viz.*

2. To

2. To ſupply them alſo with a Form of Prayer ready made for their Uſe. For it was cuſtomary, it ſeems, for the *Doctors* among the *Jews* to compoſe Prayers for the Uſe of their Scholars, as well as to inſtruct them in the Act of praying. St. *John Baptiſt*, it ſeems, had done this; which made the Diſciple in St. *Luke* to deſire of our Lord, that he alſo would be pleaſed to compoſe a Form of Prayer for their Uſe; *Lord*, ſays he, *teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his Diſciples.* In Anſwer to which, therefore, our Lord there preſcribes to them, to uſe as a Prayer thoſe very Words, which he had, once at leaſt, before dictated to them as a Pattern of Prayer. *When ye pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c. *i. e.* this, which I have formerly ſet before you as a Pattern, I now preſcribe to you as a Form of Prayer, both very proper to be us'd by it ſelf, and likewiſe to be added by you to your other Prayers, to ſupply the Defects thereof. Not that I mean hereby to reſtrain you

to

to this Form only, or to forbid you to put up other Prayers to God, as you ſhall have Occaſion, and as your Needs ſhall require; but what I mean, is, that you ſhould, ſometimes at leaſt, put up your Petitions to God in thoſe very Words, which, having formerly dictated to you as a Pattern, I do now again repeat to you as a good Form of Prayer. *When ye pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

And what we may very naturally, and very ſtrongly too, infer from hence, is this; that it is *not unlawful* to pray to God by a *ſet Form*. I might infer more, *viz.* that it is *ordinarily beſt* that we ſhould do ſo. This, I ſay, is what might fairly be argu'd from our *Saviour*'s ſo readily anſwering the Requeſt of his Diſciples, by teaching them a Form of Prayer; and not rather giving them ſome Check for making ſuch a Requeſt. But that it is *not unlawful* to uſe a Form of Prayer is all that I mean at preſent to contend for; and *that* moſt evidently follows from what has been ſaid. For our Lord, who knew

knew beſt what Petitions were moſt proper to be put up to God, knew alſo in what manner they were moſt proper to be offered up; and if he had known that a ſet Form of Words in Prayer was not pleaſing to God, he would not certainly have preſcrib'd any ſet Form of Prayer to be uſed by his own Diſciples: which yet is what he plainly does in that Place of St. *Luke*, *when ye pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

And this alone (if there were nothing elſe to be ſaid) is abundantly ſufficient to juſtify our Church, in ordering a ſet Form of Prayer to be uſed at our publick Worſhip in the Church; and to ſhew how unreaſonable and unwarrantable the Separation of the Diſſenters from the Church is upon this Account. They will not join with us in Prayer, becauſe we uſe a Form of Prayer; becauſe we pray by a ſet Form: but would they then have join'd with the Apoſtles of our Lord himſelf, in their Prayers, if they had lived in thoſe times? No; they who now ſeparate from us upon this Account only (*i. e.* not for any

juſt Exception which they have to make againſt either the Matter or the Compoſure of our Prayers, but only becauſe we uſe a ſet Form of Prayer: they, I ſay, who ſeparate from us now only upon this Account,) muſt alſo, if they had lived in the primitive Times of Chriſtianity, have ſeparated from the Apoſtles themſelves upon the ſame Account; for they alſo uſed a ſet Form of Prayer; they prayed by a Form, as we do.

And if it be asked how I prove this? I prove it, I think, very plainly from that Paſſage in St. *Luke* before-cited, *Luke* xi 1, 2. *One of his Diſciples ſaid unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John alſo taught his Diſciples.* The thing which this Diſciple here deſired of *Chriſt* plainly was, that he would teach them a *Form of Prayer*, for that was what *John* had done for his Diſciples. And this their Deſire he immediately comply'd with; he taught them a Prayer, as *John* had done; *he ſaid, when ye pray, ſay, Our Father*, &c.

Now, therefore, if the Apoſtles of our Lord did not afterwards uſe this Prayer, or

or pray in theſe Words, as he had commanded them, they diſobeyed his Command, which I preſume our Diſſenters will not affirm; (tho', by the way, if indeed they were thus diſobedient, that would not ſerve to juſtify us in the like Diſobedience; *be ye Followers of me*, ſays St. *Paul, even as I alſo am of Chriſt.* The Example of another, even tho' it be of an Apoſtle, is no farther to be follow'd than it is agreeable to this Rule. But that the Practice of the Apoſtles in this Caſe was not according to our *Saviour*'s Direction, is not to be ſuppos'd;) and if they did obey this Command of our *Saviour*, and did ſometimes pray in theſe Words which our Lord had preſcribed to them; whenever they did ſo, they prayed by a Form. And therefore our Diſſenters, if they had lived then, muſt for this Reaſon have refuſed to join in Prayer with them; they muſt then have ſet up ſeparate Congregations, diſtinct from thoſe religious Aſſemblies which were held by the Apoſtles; they muſt have ſaid that it was

neceſſary to pray to God after a better manner than the Apoſtles did.

Judge you then, I pray, for your ſelves; but ſo judge, as conſidering that you muſt hereafter give a ſtrict Account to God the Judge of all; (judge you, I ſay,) whether that can be a good Ground of ſeparating from the Church, or making a Schiſm and Diviſion in it, which was, and if you had lived then muſt have been to you, as good a Ground of forſaking the Fellowſhip of the holy Apoſtles, as it is now of withdrawing your ſelves from the Communion of the eſtabliſh'd Church.

I know not what new Light our Diſſenters pretend to, when they declaim againſt Forms of Prayer, as dull, and formal, and unacceptable to God; but ſure I am, it is not a true Light which directs them to another way than our *Saviour* directed Men to take; for *he* (as the *Apoſtle* St. *John* tells us, *John* i. 9. he) *was the true Light which lighteth every Man that cometh into the World*; and he directed Men, when they prayed, to uſe this Form of Words, to ſay, *Our Father which*

which art in Heaven, &c. Are they then wiſer than the Apoſtles, who uſed a Form of Prayer? Nay, are they wiſer than our Lord himſelf (the *Wiſdom* of God the Father) who preſcribed a Form of Prayer to his Diſciples? If they are not, then a Form of Prayer is, at leaſt, lawful; and then to ſeparate from the eſtabliſh'd Church, only becauſe ſhe uſes a Form in her publick Worſhip, is a ſinful and ſchiſmatical Separation. But if they ſhould ſay, that in this reſpect they do underſtand more than the Apoſtles did, and that they know better what will pleaſe God than our *Saviour* himſelf did: and indeed ſome of them (unleſs they are grievouſly bely'd,) have not ſcrupled to ſpeak to this Effect; I mean, to ſay that this Prayer, tho' dictated by our Lord himſelf, is yet nothing near ſo good an one as are the Prayers which they make every Day: and that, tho' it might be of ſome Uſe to thoſe for whom it was made, who were then but young Diſciples of *Chriſt*, and, as themſelves own'd, wanted to be taught how to pray; yet 'tis not fit to be now

uſed as a Prayer by Perſons of ſuch exalted Underſtandings, and ſo full of the Spirit as they are. I hope the notorious Blaſphemy of ſuch Expreſſions will be a ſufficient Caution to you to give no Heed or Credit to them who utter them: for to all ſuch conceited Perſons, I'm ſure, we may truly apply theſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, *Rom.* i. 22. *Profeſſing themſelves to be wiſe, they became Fools.*

But what is there, after all, that theſe Men do object againſt a ſet Form of Prayer? What Reaſons do they give why they may not join in it? Why, 1. They ſay, that a Form of Prayer *can't* be *ſuited* to *all Occaſions.* 2. That the Uſe of a Form is a *Stinting* of *the Spirit.* And, 3. That 'tis *contrary* to that praying *by the Spirit* which is moſt pleaſing to God.

I ſhall therefore now briefly conſider the Weight of theſe Objections againſt the Uſe of a ſet Form of Prayer; tho' indeed I think, that after what has been already ſaid to juſtify the Uſe of it from our *Saviour's* preſcribing this Form of Prayer to his Diſciples, more Words upon this Occaſion

caſion muſt be needleſs. I will not therefore uſe many.

1. Then, they ſay that a Form of Prayer can't be ſuited to all Occaſions.

Very true; but what then? Is it therefore unlawful, upon any Occaſion, to uſe a Form of Prayer that is well-ſuited to that particular Occaſion? Mayn't I, for Inſtance, in a Time of Peſtilence, uſe a Form of Prayer which is well-ſuited to a Time of Peſtilence, becauſe the ſame Form will not ſuit ſo well a Time of Famine? Or becauſe, perhaps, the Church, which provided a proper Form for one of theſe Occaſions, did not do the ſame for both of them?

Again; ſuppoſing that neither our Liturgy, nor any other Form of Prayer which is already made, is ſuited to all the Occaſions which may be hereafter; yet what does this prove? Does this prove in general the Unlawfulneſs of praying by a Form? No; all that it proves is, that that particular Form, being not ſo perfect as it

might be, is capable of Amendments and Improvements.

Nay, ſuppoſing it not poſſible that any Liturgy ſhould be ſo contrived by the Wit of Man, as to provide for all Occaſions beforehand; yet what hinders, but that when any ſuch new, and before unprovided for, Occaſion happens, a new Form of Prayer may be made which may be ſuited to that? So that, as this does not at all affect the main Queſtion, *viz.* whether it be lawful to pray by a Form; ſo neither is it any Objection againſt Liturgies, or Forms of Prayer in general: for there is no Occaſion which can ever happen, but what may be ſuited as well by a Form of Prayer to be made upon that Occaſion, as by a Prayer ſpoken *extempore*; becauſe, whatever may be ſpoken once, may be ſpoken a ſecond, or a third time; and whatever may be ſpoken, may be written down and read; and when it is ſpoken a ſecond or a third time, or when 'tis written down and read, then they call it a Form. But be it ſo; yet, if it ſuited the Occaſion the firſt time it was ſpoken,

it

it will ſuit the ſame Occaſion as well when it has been ſpoken or read an hundred times. So that this Objection againſt a Form of Prayer in general, is manifeſtly nothing but a mere Cavil.

But if what they mean by it, is only in particular, that the Prayers of the Church, now contain'd and preſcrib'd in the Liturgy, do not actually extend to all the Occaſions which we may poſſibly have. This may be granted without any Inconvenience, the Anſwer to it being very eaſy, *viz.*

That ſo neither can any Prayer that is ſpoken by any Man *extempore*, extend to all Occaſions, and expreſs all the Requeſts which every Perſon in the Congregation may have to put up to God. In this Reſpect, therefore, any Prayer which can be made is plainly as deficient as the publick Prayers of the Church are.

But the Truth is, that the Prayers of the Church are not (nor indeed are any *publick* Prayers) to be thought deficient upon this Account; eſpecially conſidering, that tho' the Church preſcribes a Form to be

be ordinarily uſed in our publick Devotions, (and which is indeed as well ſuited to all the common Occaſions of the Church, and of all the Members of it, as any publick Form can be;) yet ſhe does not thereby abridge her own Power to compoſe and enjoin occaſional Forms of Devotion upon ſpecial Emergencies. And again, tho' ſhe enjoins the Uſe of the Liturgy in the Church, and forbids any other common Prayers; (that being indeed as well ſuited to all the common Occaſions of the Church, and of all the Members of it, as 'tis fit any Office of publick Prayer ſhould be;) yet ſhe does not thereby mean to forbid her Children, when they have, any of them, any particular Sins to confeſs, any particular Bleſſings to give Thanks for, or any particular Requeſts to make known to God; to uſe any other Prayers of their own, or another's compoſing, which may be better adapted to ſuch ſpecial Occaſions than the publick Prayers are, or indeed than a publick Liturgy ſhould be. But then the proper Time and Place for

ſuch

ſuch Devotions is, when we are alone and in ſecret. But,

2. Another thing objected againſt a ſet Form of Prayer, is, that 'tis a ſtinting of the Spirit.

But here it muſt be noted, that, when we ſpeak of ſet Forms, we mean only Forms of Prayer for publick Worſhip; it being before granted, that in our private Devotions every Perſon is at his Liberty to pray, either by a Form or not, as ſhall ſeem to himſelf moſt expedient.

How then, I ſay, is a publick Form of Prayer, to be uſed in the Church, a ſtinting of the Spirit? Or *whoſe* Spirit does it ſtint? The Spirit of the *Speaker*? Or the Spirit of the *Hearers*? Or the Spirit of *God*?

(1.) Does it ſtint the Spirit of the *Speaker*? That indeed muſt be granted. But then, I ſay, that there is no Harm in this; nay, I ſay more, there's a great deal of Good in it. For this was indeed the very Deſign of the Church, in compoſing and

preſcribing a Form of Prayer for the publick Worſhip, that the Spirit of thoſe who pray in publick, and who are the Mouth of the Congregation to God, might be reſtrain'd and limited: that is, that in the publick Worſhip, which ought always to be grave, ſolemn, and ſerious, the Speaker might not run out in vain Repetitions, and idle Tautologies; that he might not utter any Expreſſions which are indecent or extravagant, and more likely to excite Laughter in the Hearers, than to ſtir up true Devotion; which they who allow themſelves the Liberty of praying *extempore*, in the publick Congregation, are very apt to do. So that if this be indeed a ſtinting of the Spirit, 'tis not however a good and devout Spirit which is thereby ſtinted; for there is nothing more apt to excite and keep up true Devotion in the Minds of the Congregation, than a Prayer which is wiſely compoſed, and gravely expreſs'd; (and ſuch are the Prayers of the Church; ſuch indeed any ſtudy'd and compoſed Form of Prayer is more likely to be, than a Prayer which is utter'd

utter'd *extempore*, without Thinking or Premeditation.) So that all the Spirit which is ſtinted, by a good Form of Prayer, is only a Spirit of Folly and Vanity, of Careleſneſs and Irreverence; nay, perhaps of Faction and Blaſphemy: and I'm ſure it is not fit there ſhould ever be any ſuch Spirit in our publick Prayers and Devotions. But,

(2.) Is it then the Spirit of the *Hearers*, that is, of thoſe who are to join with the Miniſter in Prayer, which is ſtinted by his uſing of a ſet Form?

This likewiſe may be granted; but then, in Anſwer to it, it may truly be ſaid, that this is nothing more than what is, and muſt be, whether the Miniſter uſes a Form of Prayer, or whether he prays *extempore*; and whether he prays by a Form preſcribed by the Church, or by a Form of his own compoſing. The Spirit of the Hearers is as much ſtinted in one of theſe Caſes, as in another; and not more in any one of them than in any other. For in whatſoever manner the Miniſter

niſter prays, by a Form or without, the Buſineſs of the People is to join with him in *his Prayer*; they are to mind what *he* ſays, and their Heart is to go along with *his Words*; they are not, at that time, to have any Thoughts in their Minds, but ſuch as the Words which the Miniſter utters do ſuggeſt to them. And if the Spirit of the Hearers be not thus ſtinted, *i. e.* if while the Miniſter ſpeaks one thing, they take the Liberty to think of another thing, they ceaſe to pray in common; and the Liberty which they then take of thinking what they pleaſe, is in truth neither better nor worſe than wandring in Prayer, and leaving the Buſineſs which they ought to be then about. But,

(3.) Laſtly; is it then the Spirit of *God* which is ſtinted by the Uſe of a ſet Form of Prayer?

How can that be? For the Spirit of God is not given us to teach us what Words to utter in Prayer to God; thoſe the Senſe of our own Needs and Occaſi-

ons

ons do readily enough ſupply us with; and there is no more need of an extraordinary Aſſiſtance of the Spirit to enable us to expreſs the Thoughts and Deſires of our Minds in proper Words, when we put up a Prayer to God, than there is when we put up a Petition to a Man; or indeed than there is to enable us to expreſs our Thoughts at any other Time, or upon any other Occaſion. But the Spirit of God is given us in Prayer, to excite in us pious and devout Affections towards God, and to enable us to accompany thoſe Words, which we utter in Prayer, with hearty and devout Affections. So we are taught by the *Apoſtle*, Rom. viii. 26. *Likewiſe the Spirit alſo helpeth our Infirmities; for we know not what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit it ſelf maketh Interceſſion for us, with Groanings which cannot be utter'd.* Here you ſee how the *Spirit* of God *helpeth our Infirmities*; it is not, at leaſt not ordinarily, by ſupplying us with Words; but by exciting in us devout Affections and fervent Deſires; it *maketh Interceſſion for us, with*

with Groanings which cannot be utter'd. Or if the Spirit of God be indeed aſſiſtant to any at all in the forming of their Prayers, is there not very good Reaſon to think that it is thus aſſiſting to the Guides and Paſtors of the Church, in their compoſing proper Forms of Prayer for the Uſe of the Church, as well as, or indeed much rather than, to any ſingle Man who takes upon him to utter a Prayer *extempore?* And if the publick Prayers of the Church are drawn up by the Help and Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit, (which, I'm ſure, there is as much Reaſon to believe, as that any private Man's Prayers are ſo ſuggeſted to him;) it can be no ſtinting of the Spirit to pray to God by a Form of Prayer, which was drawn up by wiſe and good Men, with the Aſſiſtance of the holy Spirit. But,

3. It was farther objected againſt the Uſe of a ſet Form of Prayer; that to pray by a Form, is contrary to that praying *by the Spirit*, which is moſt pleaſing to God.

But

But how can that be? when (as I have juſt now ſhewn) we may pray *by the Spirit*, as well when we uſe a Form, as when we pray *extempore*; in Caſe the publick Form which we make uſe of was drawn up by the Aſſiſtance of the Spirit: which, as I ſaid, there is at leaſt as much Reaſon to believe, as that any *extempore* Prayer is ſo drawn up.

But the Truth is, they miſtake the Scripture, who think that it is our Duty to pray *by the Spirit*; for this is no where commanded or required. We are commanded indeed to worſhip God *in Spirit*; and our *Saviour* ſays, that none elſe are true Worſhippers of God, but ſuch as *worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth*, John iv. 23, 24. And we are alſo directed by the Apoſtles, to *pray in the Spirit*, and to *pray with the Spirit*; but to *pray in the Spirit*, and *with the Spirit*, is a quite different thing from praying *by the Spirit*, as that Phraſe is commonly underſtood. For what is commonly meant by *praying by the Spirit*, is, to have our Prayers, both Matter and Words, dicta-

ted and ſuggeſted to us by the holy Spirit of God; 'tis to pray by Inſpiration, as the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles* ſpake and wrote, *as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt*; 'tis to pray, as the holy *Pſalmiſt* did, in thoſe *Pſalms* which we now read in the Bible, and are granted to have been of divine Inſpiration. But thus to pray to God is not laid upon us as a Duty; for it is no where in Scripture required of us, that we ſhould pray by Inſpiration: and when any Man tells you that he prays by the Spirit, if what he tells you be indeed true, *i. e.* if the Matter and Words which he utters in Prayer are really ſuggeſted to him by the holy Spirit, as he would have you believe; you ought to take every Word which ſuch a Man ſpeaks in his Prayer, not as the Words of a Man, but as the Words of God. You ought therefore carefully to write them down from his Mouth, and to give Copies thereof about to the *Chriſtian Church*. For the Spirit of God is always the ſame; and if there be any Prayer which is now dictated to any Man by the holy Spirit, that

Prayer,

Prayer, if it were written down, would be as much Scripture, and as good Scripture, as the *Pſalms* of *David*, or any other part of the *holy Bible*. For that which makes what we call *the Scripture* to be truly the Word of God, tho' ſpoken or written by Men, is becauſe it was ſpoken and written by Inſpiration of the *Holy Ghoſt*; by the ſame Reaſon therefore any other Prayer, any other Words of a Man, ſpoken by Inſpiration of the ſame Spirit, is no leſs the *Word of God* than that is.

And yet, I believe, that if they who are us'd to hear the *extempore* Effuſions of thoſe who pretend to pray by the Spirit, would take the Pains to write them down from their Mouths, and would afterwards carefully peruſe and examine them, they would eaſily be convinc'd of the Falſity of that Pretence; they would ſoon ſee the Difference between thoſe Prayers and Scripture.

But be that as it will; yet, as I ſaid before, to pray *by the Spirit*, *i.e.* to pray by Inſpiration, however it may be ſuppo-

sed to be the *Privilege* and *Advantage* of some Men, that they do so, yet is no where commanded to any Man, as a *Duty*. All that is ever required of us, is, to pray *in the Spirit*, and to pray *with the Spirit*; and that, as I said, is a quite different thing from praying *by Inspiration*. For to pray *in the Spirit*, or *with the Spirit*, is nothing else but only to mind what we say, to give good Attention to our Prayers, and to accompany the Words of our Mouth with suitable Affections and Desires of the Heart. And thus we may pray *in the Spirit*, or *with the Spirit*, as well when we pray by a *Form*, as when we pray *extempore*. Nay, I believe it is much easier so to pray *in the Spirit*, or *with the Spirit*, *i. e.* to attend to what is said, and to go along with it in our Minds and Desires, when the Minister prays by a Form which we have been us'd to, and are well acquainted with, than it would be if he every time us'd a new Prayer.

And that this is the true scriptural meaning of praying *in*, or *with the Spirit*,

rit, and that it was not thereby intended to be laid upon us as a Duty, that we ſhould pray by Inſpiration of the holy Spirit, is, I think, very evident from 1 *Cor.* xiv. 15. *What is it then? I will pray with the Spirit, and I will pray with the Underſtanding alſo; I will ſing with the Spirit, and I will ſing with the Underſtanding alſo.* It is evident, I ſay, from hence, that we are no otherwiſe obliged to *pray with the Spirit*, than we are to *ſing with the Spirit*. If therefore we do *ſing with the Spirit*, when our Hearts go along with our Voices in ſinging any *Pſalm*, or *Hymn*, which was compoſed and written down before; (and I preſume no ſober Perſon has any other Notion of *ſinging with the Spirit*, but this;) then ſo likewiſe may we *pray*, ſo alſo we do *pray with the Spirit*, when our Hearts and Minds go along with the Words which are utter'd in Prayer, whether the Prayer be ſpoken by our ſelves, or another; and whether it be utter'd *extempore*, or be a Form which was compoſed long before.

And moſt certainly, if our *Saviour*, who has commanded us to *worſhip* God *in Spirit*, and to *pray with the Spirit*, had not known that God might be worſhipp'd and prayed to, in Spirit at leaſt, as well by a ſet Form of Prayer, as by an *extempore* Effuſion; when the Requeſt was put to him by his Diſciples, to *teach* them to *pray*; he would have taken that Occaſion to tell them, that there was no need of their ever troubling themſelves about that Matter, foraſmuch as no Prayers would be acceptable to God, but ſuch only as were immediately dictated or inſpired by the *Holy Ghoſt:* ſo that conſequently their beſt way would be never to pray at all, but only when they were moved to it by the Spirit, and then to pray *as the Spirit gave them Utterance.* He would not certainly, had he known that praying by a Form was unpleaſing to God, (he would not, I ſay, then) have preſcrib'd a Form of Prayer for them to uſe, as he did; when, in Anſwer to that their Requeſt, *he ſaid unto them, when ye pray,*

pray, ſay, Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

III. The next thing I was to ſpeak ſomewhat of, was the *Matter* of this Prayer. And concerning this, I ſhall obſerve only two things.

1. That it is a very full and comprehenſive Form of Prayer; there being no Petition which we can at any time have Occaſion to put up to God, either for our Souls, or for our Bodies; for our ſelves, or for others; which is not included in, and may not be reduced to, ſome or other of the Petitions of this ſhort Prayer.

And this is a very good Reaſon, (beſides the expreſs Command of our Lord for the Uſe of it) why we ſhould very frequently put up our Requeſts to God, in thoſe very Words which are here taught us. Becauſe tho' it may be expedient, that according as thoſe Needs are which are moſt preſſing upon us, or we are moſt ſenſible of, we ſhould be ſometimes more large and particular than we can be in the

Uſe of any general Form, ſuited, as this is, to the Condition of all Chriſtians; yet it is not fit that our Thoughts and Deſires ſhould ever be ſo wholly bent upon thoſe Subjects wherewith at preſent we are moſt affected, as to forget or overlook others, every whit as neceſſary to employ our Meditations about. And then we may be ſure that we have omitted nothing proper to be requeſted of God, when we have ſupply'd the Defects of our own imperfect Prayers by the Super-addition of this moſt excellent, and moſt comprehenſive Form of Prayer, which our Lord himſelf, who knew all our Needs, hath, in Compaſſion to our Weakneſs, taught us to make uſe of.

2. The other thing which I ſhall obſerve, concerning the Matter of this Prayer, is this; that tho' it was preſcrib'd and given by our Lord himſelf, who being the *Wiſdom* of the Father, and having *not received the Spirit by Meaſure*, had no need to copy or learn any thing from others, yet (as has been obſerved and made out

out by thoſe verſed in the *Jewiſh Learning*; [Grot. Cappel.]) there is nothing in this whole Prayer which could even then be accounted new, either in the Matter, or in the Expreſſion of it; but that it is taken, every part of it, with very ſmall Variation, out of thoſe Forms of Prayer which were cuſtomarily uſed by the *Jews* in our *Saviour*'s Time; [*Comber.*]

It appears therefore from hence, that our *Saviour* was no Affecter of Novelty in Devotion, no more than in other things. He was not one of thoſe who diſliked a good thing only becauſe it was old. He was not of the Mind of ſome later Reformers, of greater Zeal than Diſcretion, who in their haſte to root up the *Tares*, have had no regard to the *Wheat* which was mix'd with them; and in their Zeal to extirpate throughly all Superſtition, have well-nigh deſtroy'd all Face of Religion. But our *Saviour* wiſely diſtinguiſhed between good and bad; and tho' he could, doubtleſs, have taught his Diſciples a Prayer which was entirely new, yet choſe rather to take the chief Materials of his Prayer

Prayer out of the Jewiſh Devotions, then in common Uſe; that ſo it might appear, that in the other Reformations which he made in Worſhip or Religion, he was not govern'd by Fancy, or guided by a Spirit of Faction or Schiſm, but acted wholly according to the Truth and Reaſon of things.

It is therefore no juſt Objection againſt the Liturgy of our Church, (if it were true, as it is not,) that it is taken out of what they call the *Maſs-Book*; a Book in which it muſt be granted, and is readily own'd, there was a great Mixture of ſuch Devotions, as muſt be allow'd to be not only ſuperſtitious, but idolatrous. For that's not the Queſtion, what the Book was before it was reform'd, but what it is now that it is reform'd; not whether there were any Errors in it formerly, but whether there be any Errors left in it now. For if there be not, then it muſt be granted that it is well and ſufficiently reformed; and the wiſe Compilers of our now moſt excellent Liturgy, in continuing in it ſome Prayers or Collects, which had been

been indeed in Uſe in the time of Popery, but which were alſo in Uſe in the Church long before the firſt beginning of Popery; being Portions of the moſt ancient Liturgies in the firſt and pureſt Times of Chriſtianity, (in continuing, I ſay, ſome ſuch good Prayers and Collects in our preſent Liturgy, the wiſe Compilers of it) did no more than our *Saviour* himſelf did in the compoſing of his own Prayer, the whole Matter whereof was taken by him out of former Books of Devotion then in Uſe among the *Jews*. And for this we may well admire the Wiſdom, Temper, and Judgment of our firſt Reformers; but we can ſee nothing in what they did, which is in the leaſt liable to blame. And without conſidering from whence they took any of the Materials of that Liturgy which they have left to us, we may truly ſay, that it is a moſt excellent Compoſition; every whit as good as it would have been had it been entirely new, and in ſome Reſpects better.

From hence alſo it farther appears, (I mean from our *Saviour*'s taking into his own

own Prayer thoſe Words, Expreſſions, and Forms of Speech, which had been formerly in Uſe; it appears, I ſay, from hence,) that God would not be better pleas'd with our Prayers, if they were offered up every Day in a new Style and Dreſs, than he is when they are offered up in the ſame Words; provided the Matter of them be good, and the Words of our Mouth be accompanied with the fervent Deſires of our Heart. For moſt certainly, if new Phraſes and Expreſſions had been more pleaſing to God than old ones, our *Saviour* would never have preſcrib'd any Form of Prayer to his Diſciples; and much leſs would he have taken into this Form, thoſe Petitions, and thoſe Expreſſions thereof, which had been in Uſe in the *Jewiſh Church* long before.

IV. Laſtly; another thing which I propos'd to conſider in general, concerning the *Lord's Prayer*, was, the *Frame* and *Compoſure* of it. And concerning this we may obſerve, likewiſe, two things.

1. That

1. That the *Plural Number* is uſed throughout the whole Prayer. For 'tis not ſaid *my Father*, but, *our Father*; not give *me my* daily Bread, but give *us*; not forgive *me*, but forgive *us our* Treſpaſſes; and ſo on.

'Tis plain therefore, from hence, that this Prayer was deſign'd by our *Saviour*, chiefly to be uſed in Company with others, that it was meant for a publick Prayer. And from this it farther appears, that tho' our *Saviour*, at the 6th ℣. of this Chapter, (in Oppoſition to the Practice of the *Phariſees*, who, even in their ſingle Devotions, always prayed openly, that they might be ſeen of Men;) had directed his Diſciples to retire to a Cloſet, or ſome ſecret Place, where they might be ſure not to be over-look'd or over-heard by any, and there to put up their Prayers in ſecret, to their Father who ſaw in ſecret; yet did not thereby deſign to forbid publick Prayer, at proper Seaſons and Opportunities. What he meant to enjoin, was, that our private Prayers ſhould, to avoid Oſten-

Oſtentation, be as private as they could well be contriv'd; but then, that we might not miſunderſtand him, when he comes here to teach us how to pray, he puts into our Mouths ſuch Words as were moſt proper to be uſed in Company: clearly intimating thereby, that private Devotions are not to exclude the publick; but that we ought alſo, at proper Seaſons and Opportunities, to pray in Company with others.

Not but that we may, even when we are alone, uſe this Form of Prayer, and ſay, *Our Father*, &c. But then when we do ſo, the very Form of Speech which we uſe, ſhews, that tho' we are alone by our ſelves, we do extend our good Wiſhes to others beſides our ſelves. For it would be very improper for a Man to ſay, give *us our* daily Bread, and forgive *us our* Treſpaſſes, and the like, if he meant to beg theſe Bleſſings of God to and for himſelf only.

From this Form of Speech, therefore, which our *Saviour* himſelf here teaches us to uſe in our Prayers to God, *Our* Father,

ther, give *us*, forgive *us*, and the like; we plainly learn, that it is our Duty to pray *with others*, and to pray *for others*, as well as alone, and for our ſelves.

2. Another thing which may be obſerv'd in the general Frame and Compoſure of this Prayer, is this; that the three former Petitions of it regard the Honour and Glory of God; *hallowed be thy Name*; *thy Kingdom come*; and *thy Will be done*: and 'tis after this only which we are taught or allow'd to put up Petitions for our ſelves; *give us our daily Bread*; *forgive us our Treſpaſſes*; *deliver us from Evil*, &c.

And what we ſhould learn from hence, is; that it is our Duty to make the Glory of God our chief Aim and Deſign, and to deſire nothing elſe, not even for our ſelves, but in Subordination to that. According to that expreſs Direction given us by our *Saviour* at the 33ᵈ ℣. of this Chapter; *Seek ye firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*; and that Precept of the

the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. x. 31. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do; do all to the Glory of God.*

To him therefore, (1 Tim. i. 17.) *the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be Honour and Glory, for ever and ever.* Amen.

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THE PREFACE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER EXPLAINED.

DISCOURSE XLIX.

The Preface of the Lord's Prayer explained.

MATTH. vi. 9.

After this Manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in Heaven, &c.

OUR Lord having in the foregoing Verſes caution'd us againſt ſeeking Glory to our ſelves in our Addreſſes to God, and againſt ekeing out our Prayers to God

vain Repetitions, and *much ſpeaking*; as if, like the *Heathens*, we thought God could not well underſtand our Needs, unleſs we were very copious and particular in declaring them, or that he was pleas'd with a Multitude of Words; proceeds in the Text, and following Verſes, to inſtruct us farther in the Duty of Prayer, by preſcribing a Form of Words very proper to be uſed therein, which is what we commonly call *The Lord's Prayer*. *Our Father which art in Heaven*; *hallowed be thy Name*, &c.

In which there are three principal Parts; the *Preface*, the *Body* of the *Prayer*, and the *Concluſion*.

The *Preface* is a ſolemn Invocation of God, to whom we direct our Prayer. *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

The *Body* of the *Prayer* conſiſts of ſix ſeveral Petitions which we put up to him.

And the *Concluſion* contains a Doxology, or a ſolemn Recognition of the Power and Majeſty of that God to whom we have offer'd up our Requeſts; *thine is*

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the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, for ever and ever.

In ſerious Conſideration whereof, we are taught, in the laſt place, to add our *Amen* to the whole. By which Word we ſignify not only our full and hearty Conſent to all and every the Clauſes of the foregoing Prayer, but alſo our Faith and Hope in God, that he will beſtow upon us thoſe things which we have ask'd of him.

In ſpeaking of all which Particulars, I ſhall,

I. Explain the Meaning of each Clauſe, and ſhew what it is which we are therein and thereby taught to acknowledge to, or to beg of God; or what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words. And,

II. I ſhall mention the Duties, which, from the ſeveral Clauſes and Petitions of this Prayer, we are inſtructed in, and oblig'd to.

I. I now begin with the firſt part of the Prayer, *viz.* the *Preface*, which is, as I ſaid, a ſolemn Invocation of God, to whom we direct our Prayer. *Our Father which art in Heaven*, &c.

And here we may conſider, 1. The Object of Prayer in general, *viz.* God, called here, *Our Father in Heaven*: and, 2. What things we do, in this Compellation or Invocation of God, aſcribe to him, and profeſs and declare our Belief of.

1. The Object of Prayer in general, *viz.* God called here, *Our Father in Heaven.* To him we are to direct our religious Prayers, and to none other, as our *Saviour* himſelf teacheth us moſt expreſſly, *Mat.* iv. 10. *Thou ſhalt worſhip the Lord thy God, and him only ſhalt thou ſerve.*

There is neither Precept nor Preſident for Creature-Worſhip in the whole Bible; not of the moſt glorious Angel in Heaven; much leſs of the Souls of departed Saints, ſuppos'd to be now advanc'd thither.

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On the contrary, we are expreſſly forbidden in the firſt Commandment, to *have any other God but Jehovah, i.e.* to pay divine Worſhip to any other Being; and God hath ſaid that he will, by no means, *give his Honour to another.*

And particularly, as to the Worſhip of Angels, which ſeems the moſt warrantable of any Creature-Worſhip, becauſe they are the moſt excellent of all Creatures; that is not only expreſſly forbidden by the *Apoſtle*, Coloſſ. ii. 18. but when St. *John*, in ſome Aſtoniſhment at the glorious Apparition of an Angel, and thinking him, perhaps, to be the Deity aſſuming a viſible Shape, fell down to worſhip before him; we find him twice reprov'd for it by the Angel himſelf, *Rev.* xix. 10. and xxii. 9. in theſe Words, *ſee thou do it not*; *for I am thy Fellow-Servant*; *worſhip God.*

And how much the holy Apoſtles, who of all Men, who of all Creatures, next to the Angels, ſeem the moſt proper Objects of religious Worſhip, did abominate ſuch Worſhip, we learn from two Examples, and thoſe too of the two moſt eminent A-

poſtles; firſt of St. *Peter*, *Acts* x. 26. who, when *Cornelius* was fallen down at his Feet to worſhip him, *took him up, ſaying, ſtand up, I my ſelf alſo am a Man:* and then of St. *Paul*, with St. *Barnabas*, who, when the People at *Lyſtra* took them for Gods, and would thereupon have done Sacrifice to them, *rent their Cloaths, and ran in among the People, ſaying, Sirs, why do you theſe things? We alſo are Men of like Paſſions with you; and preach unto you that ye ſhould turn from theſe Vanities unto the living God, which made Heaven and Earth, and the Sea, and all things that are therein*; as you may ſee, *Acts* xiv. 15.

And yet in both theſe Caſes the Objects, *viz.* the Angel, and theſe Apoſtles, were viſibly preſent with thoſe who would have worſhipped them. It muſt therefore be worſe ſtill to give ſuch Worſhip to any Creatures not viſibly preſent, and who may, likely, not know any thing of what we are doing. For tho' the Angels are indeed in Heaven, in the Preſence of God, yet their Knowledge of things is bounded

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and confin'd; and 'tis likely they may know nothing more of what is done upon Earth, than God is pleaſed to reveal to them. And as to the Saints departed, they as little know what we are doing, as we know where they are. *Abraham is ignorant of us, and Iſrael acknowledgeth us not*; ſo we are told, *Iſaiah* lxiii. 16. And whether, if they do know any thing of us, they are in a Condition to do any Kindneſs for us, we know not; nor indeed whither to direct our Prayers to them for that Purpoſe. For all which we know of the State of the Souls of good Men departed, is, that *they reſt from their Labours*, and that *they are in Peace*; but where their Abode is, God has not told us. All that I think we have ground from Scripture to believe concerning them, is, that tho' they are at preſent very happy, and are therefore ſaid to be in *Paradiſe*, and in *Abraham's Boſom*; they are not however, as yet, in that exalted and glorifyed State, which they will be put into after the Reſurrection, and final Judgment. Till then, therefore, (tho' indeed not

not then neither; but, I ſay, till then at leaſt;) they can't be proper Objects of Worſhip; nor (as appears from Scripture,) were they ever thought ſo by any Perſon among the *Jews* or *Chriſtians* in ancient times; unleſs we take the Parable of the *rich Man* and *Lazarus*, (*Luk.* xvi.) for a true Hiſtory. For there indeed we have one Inſtance of Prayer made to a Saint departed, even to *Father Abraham*; but then, when it ſhall be conſidered *who* it was who put up that Prayer, *viz.* the *rich Glutton*; and *where*, and in *what ſtate* he was when he put it up, even in *Hell*, or *Hades*, *tormented* in thoſe *Flames*; I preſume that Example will not be thought ſufficient to warrant *Chriſtians* upon Earth, in putting up Prayers to the Saints departed, as to a ſort of Petty-Gods in Heaven.

This then being ſettled, that God, and God only, is the Object of a religious Prayer; whom we are here taught to call *Our Father in Heaven*. Let us now conſider,

2. What

2. What things they are which, in this Compellation or Invocation of God, (compoſing the *Preface* of the *Lord's Prayer,)* we aſcribe to him, and profeſs and declare our Belief of; and they are chiefly theſe three,

(1.) The *Goodneſs* of God, and his *Readineſs* to help us, and do us Good. This we own, by calling him *Father*.

(2.) The *Univerſality* of his *Goodneſs*, that it is not limited or confin'd to our ſelves only, or to a few, but is extended to all Mankind, to whom he is a common Father; and to all whom he bears the ſame fatherly Affection which he does to us. And our Belief of this we profeſs by calling him *Our Father*, not *my Father*.

(3.) Laſtly; we likewiſe, in this Preface, declare our Belief of his *infinite Power*; that he is as *able* as he is willing to do us Good. And this we declare, by calling him

him our *heavenly* Father, or our Father which is *in Heaven*.

And our Belief of theſe three things is a juſt ground of Faith and Confidence in God, and of Aſſurance that our Prayer will be regarded by him. For,

(1.) Being permitted to call him *Father*, and thereby aſſur'd that he bears us the Tenderneſs and Compaſſion of a Father, we may be confident that he is ready and willing to grant all the reaſonable Deſires and Requeſts of thoſe to whom he is ſo related; according to that of the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. ciii. 13. *Like as a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* And ſo our *Saviour* argues, *Matth.* vii. 11. *If ye, being evil, know how to give good Gifts unto your Children; how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them (i.e.* to his Children,) *that ask him?* But,

(2.) If he was only a Father to ſome, and not to others of us, we might ſtill be afraid

afraid whether our own Petitions in particular would be anſwered or not; becauſe, whatever he is to others, we might doubt whether he was a Father to us or no; and there is no Man who could with good Confidence and Aſſurance ſay to him, *my Father*, if he could not alſo call him *our Father*.

But now being taught by our *Saviour* in this Prayer, which was deſign'd by him for the Uſe of every Member of his Church, to call him *Our Father*; extending, by that Expreſſion, his fatherly Relation to the whole Race of Mankind; every Perſon, warranted or commanded to uſe this Prayer, is aſſured that God is a *Father* to him in particular, becauſe he is ſo to us all.

And if he be the common Father of us all, and ſo alike related to every one of us, this gives us Aſſurance that he *is no Reſpecter of Perſons*, *but* that *in every Nation, he that feareth God, and worketh Righteouſneſs*, of what State or Condition ſoever he be in this World, *is accepted*

cepted with him, Acts x. 34, 35. But then,

(3.) Tho' he be our Father, and ſo has, we may be aſſured, a true Love and Kindneſs to us, and a good Will to help us, and to ſupply our Needs; yet he might poſſibly want Power to do us the Good which he would do. For this, we know, is the Caſe of many Fathers upon Earth; they do truly love, and moſt heartily wiſh well to their Children; and would, with all their Souls, give them Bread when they want it, and cry to them for it; but alas! they have it not to give, they themſelves being many times as indigent and impotent as their Children; and ſo all which they can do for them, is to compaſſionate thoſe their Wants, which they are not able to relieve. They have a ready Will enough to beſtow all Good upon their Children, but they want Power to do them any Good at all.

But now God, our *heavenly Father*, is as powerful as he is good; he is as rich as he is bountiful; he is as able, as he is willing

willing to help us. And this we are taught to believe, and to acknowledge our Belief of, in this Preface to the Lord's Prayer, by calling him our Father which is *in Heaven.* For being *in Heaven* he is above all; he is the ſupreme Lord and Governor of the whole World; *he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth; and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him, what doeſt thou?* Dan. iv. 35. And, *as for our God,* ſays the *Pſalmiſt, he is in Heaven; he hath done whatſoever pleaſed him,* Pſal. cxv. 3.

In a word; our God being *in Heaven, i. e.* being the great God of Heaven and Earth, he can do whatever he will; and being *a Father,* he has the Love and Tenderneſs of a Father to all his Children; and being *Our Father,* and we, conſequently, every one of us, his Children, we may reaſonably hope and expect from him all the good things which we can ever want or deſire. And more than this needs not to be believed by us, to excite in us a firm Faith, and a good Aſſurance, that

that all thoſe Petitions which in the following Prayer we put up to him, (which, being taught us by our *Saviour* himſelf, we are ſure are ſuch as are agreeable to the Will of God;) will be graciouſly heard and anſwered by him. And all theſe things we do own and acknowledge, in this Preface to the Lord's Prayer, when we ſay, *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

'Tis as if we had ſaid in more Words, "O good God, who, as the common "*Creator of us all*, art very kind and "gracious to all Men; who, as a *Father*, "art willing; and, as being *in Heaven* "moſt high, art able to give us all that "we want;" *hallowed be thy Name*, &c.

And ſo much for Explication of the firſt part of the Prayer, the Preface, or the Invocation.

But before I proceed farther, in the Explication of this Prayer, I ſhall (according to the Method before laid down) briefly mention the Duties, which, from this Preface to the following Petitions, we are inſtructed in, and oblig'd to.

And

And there are ſeveral Points of Duty which we may learn from hence. For,

1. If we conſider only the relative Appellation which we are here taught to give to God, by calling him *Father*; and thereby owning him to be the Author of our Being, the Giver of all good things, and very kindly affected towards us: this alone may ſerve to inſtruct us in ſeveral Duties. For,

(1.) If he be a Father to us, if he be the Author of our Being, and if it be he on whom we depend for the Supply of all our Wants; then we ought to reſpect and honour him, as a Son does his Father; giving him all poſſible Reverence, both in our Hearts and in our Actions.

For even natural Reaſon teaches us, that a Father ought to be honour'd and reſpected by his Children. And if the *Fathers of our Fleſh* do deſerve, and may claim Reverence from us, who were only the ſubordinate Means and Inſtruments of our coming into this World; much more

hath he an undoubted Title thereto, who created us out of nothing, and is the *Father* of our *Spirits*; who formed our Bodies into Shape, and breathed thereinto immortal Souls.

And thus the Prophet *Malachi*, or rather God himſelf ſpeaking by the Prophet's Mouth, does moſt ſtrongly argue, *Mal.* i. 6. *A Son honoureth his Father*, (*i. e.* he either doth ſo, or he ought to do ſo; and if he does otherwiſe, he is condemn'd by his own Reaſon and Conſcience, as deficient in a neceſſary Point of Duty: *a Son honoureth his Father,) and a Servant his Maſter*; *if I then be a Father, where is mine Honour?*

(2.) If God be our Father, on whom we depend for all we are, have, or expect; then as we ought to ſhew great Reverence to him at all times, ſo then more eſpecially when we approach his Preſence, and while we continue in his Sight, and under his Eye.

A good Son does never, either in Words or Behaviour, ſpeak or do any thing which is

is ſlighting or diſreſpectful to his Father; but when he comes before him into his Preſence, eſpecially if it be with a Deſign to beg ſome Favour at his Hands, he then, be ſure, behaves himſelf towards him with the moſt humble and lowly Carriage, and ſpeaks to him in the moſt reſpectful and ſubmiſſive manner. And if we do thus to our earthly Parents, much more ſhould we do the ſame to our heavenly Father; who tho' he is pleaſed to attribute to himſelf the ſame Relation which a Father hath to his Son, and to call us his Children, is yet infinitely more ſuperior to us, than our Fathers according to the Fleſh are. For they, tho' under God they were the Givers of our Being to us; are yet of the ſame Species with our ſelves, neither are they in their own Nature more excellent than the Children which are begotten by them; whereas his moſt excellent Nature is at an infinite Diſtance from ours: ſo that had not he himſelf encouraged us to it, it would have been the boldeſt Preſumption imaginable, in us, ſo much as to have ſtyled him our

Father. Whenever therefore we come into his Preſence, eſpecially if it be to put up any Petition to him, it highly becomes us to ſhew all poſſible Signs of the profoundeſt Reverence, and moſt lowly Submiſſion to him. And as we ſhould approach him with the deepeſt Humility of Mind, ſo ſhould we alſo uſe the moſt humble Proſtrations of Body; ſtanding bare in his Preſence, and falling low on our Knees before his Footſtool. And if we do not demean our ſelves thus towards him, our Behaviour is manifeſtly not ſuch, as the Behaviour of Children towards their Father ought to be.

For let me ask any Man, who is a Father, whether if his Son, (tho', as I ſaid before, of the ſame Nature with himſelf, and, bating the Relation, as good in all Reſpects as himſelf;) when he came to him to beg a Favour of him, ſhould before he began, or at any time while he was making his Addreſs, take a Chair, and ſit down (as we ſay) *Cheek by Joll* with him; he would not think ſuch diſreſpectful and unmannerly Carriage a juſt barr

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to his granting the thing which was requeſted of him; if not rather a juſt Provocation to the caſting him wholly out of Favour, and of forbidding him his Preſence for ever? What then can you think of thoſe (what can you think of your ſelves? if this be your own Practice; as it evidently is of too many even at the Church, in the publick Aſſemblies;) who uſe the ſame irreverent and unmannerly Poſture, when they are offering up their Petitions, nay, when they are uttering this very Prayer to God? What mean they by calling him Father, when, by their Behaviour towards him, one would think they hardly thought him ſo good as their Equal? Or if indeed they do believe his fatherly Relation, and his infinite Superiority to themſelves, how can they behave themſelves with greater Unmannerlineſs to him, while they are imploring his Mercy and Goodneſs, than they would do to any Man, tho' much their Inferior, while they were requeſting any Favour or Kindneſs from him? How can they but fear that ſuch their unmannerly and irre-

verent Behaviour ſhould provoke God, not only to deny and reject their preſent Petitions, but to forbid them from ever more appearing in his Preſence, or expecting any Favour from him?

And let it not here be ſaid, that *the Lord ſeeth not as Man ſeeth; for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, but the Lord looketh on the Heart.* For tho' this indeed be true, (for they are the Words of God himſelf, concerning himſelf, in 1 *Sam.* xvi. 7.) 'tis yet no Excuſe, much leſs is it a Reaſon for the Irreverence of our Worſhip. For what can theſe Words mean, *the Lord ſeeth not as Man ſeeth*? Can they mean, that God does not ſee ſo much as Man? No ſurely; but that he ſees a great deal more than Man does; he ſees all which Man ſees; and he ſees alſo what Men does not ſee. And ſo it follows, *for Man looketh on the outward Appearance, i. e.* he ſees that, and he ſees nothing elſe; he can but only gueſs at the Heart, by that outward Appearance which he ſees: *but God looketh on the Heart; i. e.* God looks directly into

to that; that's as plain before his Sight, as a viſible Object is before the Sight of a Man. But tho' he ſees things which are inviſible to us, it does not therefore follow, that he does not ſee the things which are viſible even to our Eyes. He therefore ſees, at leaſt as well as we do, whether a Man's Behaviour in the time of Worſhip be decent or indecent, reverent or irreverent; the Difference is, that whereas if a Man behaves himſelf decently and reverently in the Worſhip of God, we have no Reaſon but to think that he is a devout and religious Worſhipper; God, who ſees directly into his Heart, may know infallibly that he is not ſo: but if a Man's Behaviour be indecent and irreverent, even in our Sight, it is doubtleſs ſo in God's Sight too, and conſequently infinitely more offenſive to him than it is to us. For as God requires the Worſhip of the Heart, ſo he requires the Worſhip of the Body too. *O come let us worſhip, and fall down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker:* that's what God exacts from us, and what he has

Reaſon to exact; the Worſhip of our Bodies, becauſe he was the Maker of them, as well as the Worſhip of our Soul, becauſe he ſees into that. And as both Body and Soul were made by him, ſo were they likewiſe both redeem'd by him. So that to worſhip him with either the Soul only, (if that could be,) or with the Body only, (which may be, and too often is,) is either of them but giving him ſome part, but half at moſt, of the Worſhip which belongs to him, and is his due. And ſo we are taught by the *Apoſtle*, 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20. *Your Body ye have of God, and ye are not* (your Body more than your Soul,) *your own. For ye are bought with a Price, therefore glorify God in your Body, and in your Spirit, which are God's.*

(3.) If God be our Father, and we his Children, we ought to endeavour to reſemble him, and to be as like him as poſſibly we can.

Now he created us at firſt in his own Image, and after his own Likeneſs; but this

this Image we have foully defaced; this Likeneſs we have, in great Meaſure, worn off by Sin; rendring our ſelves thereby more like to the *Devil*. And while we continue to do the Devil's Works, ſo long we are the Devil's Children, and not God's; ſo long the Devil will own us, but God will not. *Ye are of your Father the Devil*, ſays our *Saviour* to the unbelieving *Jews*; *and the Works of your Father ye will do*, John viii. 44.

But tho' we are, by a Courſe of Sin, greatly degenerated from our firſt Stock, it is yet ſtill in our Power, thro' the Aſſiſtance of God's Grace, to be reſtor'd by Adoption, to that ſame Relation to God from which we have fallen. And this Relation we are reſtor'd to by our Regeneration in Baptiſm, at which time *the Spirit of his Son is ſent forth into our Hearts, crying, Abba, Father*, Gal. iv. 6. And this Relation will be inviolably preſerv'd, ſo long as we make it our ſincere Endeavour to conform our ſelves to his Likeneſs, to be holy and pure, juſt and merciful, as he is; and to reſemble him

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as much as we can in all his imitable Perfections.

This therefore we ought to do; or elſe we ought not, elſe we cannot in good Reaſon call him *Father*. To be truly his Children we muſt be like him; we muſt, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *Coloſſ.* iv. 23, 24. *be renewed in the Spirit of* our *Minds*, and *put off concerning the former Converſation the old Man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful Luſts; and put on the new Man, which, after God, is created in Righteouſneſs and true Holineſs.* And, *be ye Followers of God, as dear Children*, ſays the ſame *Apoſtle*, *Eph.* v. 1. There, from this Relation which we bear to God, he argues our Obligation to conform our ſelves to his Likeneſs. St. *Peter* alſo urges the ſame Argument to the ſame Purpoſe, 1 *Pet.* i. 14. *As obedient Children, not faſhioning your ſelves, according to the former Luſts in your Ignorance; but as he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of Converſation: becauſe it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.* And from

from the ſame Relation our *Saviour* himſelf alſo infers the ſame Duty, *Matth.* v. 48. *Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.*

(4.) If God be our *Father*, it is then alſo our Duty (a Duty plainly reſulting from this Relation which we ſtand in towards God,) to truſt in him, and to depend upon him, as Children do in and upon their Parents. Eſpecially, when we have not only good Ground in Reaſon to believe, that, as our Father, he bears a fatherly Affection to us, ſincerely deſires our Welfare and Happineſs, and conſequently will deny us nothing neceſſary, in order to it; but have alſo the ſure Word of God, as a farther, and indeed more certain Foundation, of ſuch our Truſt and Affiance in his Goodneſs. For by that we are aſſur'd, *Pſal.* ciii. 13. *That like as a Father pitieth his Children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him.* And our *Saviour* himſelf, after he had given us a general Promiſe or Aſſurance of God's Readineſs to do all for us which we can reaſonably

reaſonably deſire or requeſt of him, in *Luke* xi. 9, 10. *Ask, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you. For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that ſeeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it ſhall be opened*; proceeds then, at the 11th, 12th, and 13th Verſes, to declare the rational Ground we had for ſuch Aſſurance, even antecedently to his own Promiſe; that ſo our Belief of his Promiſe might be without any the leaſt Doubtfulneſs or Diſtruſt, in theſe Words; *If a Son ſhall ask Bread of any of you that is a Father, will he give him a Stone? Or if he ask a Fiſh, will he for a Fiſh give him a Serpent? Or if he ask an Egg, will he offer him a Scorpion? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good things unto your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit* (or, as 'tis expreſs'd in St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, *how much more ſhall your Father which is in Heaven give good things, i. e.* all things which are good,) *to them that ask him?*

(5.) If

(5.) If God be our *Father*, then it is plainly our Duty to behave our ſelves *obediently*, as well as reſpectfully towards him, in all things. For the Name of a *Father* implies in it, not only Eminence and Superiority, but alſo Authority. A *Father* may require Obedience to his Commands, as well as Reſpect to his Perſon. *Children obey your Parents in all things*, (ſays the *Apoſtle*, Coloſſ. iii. 20.) *for this is well-pleaſing unto the Lord*; that is, it is the Will of God that ye ſhould do ſo. And again, *Eph.* vi. 1. *Children obey your Parents in the Lord, for this is right*; that is, 'tis what is juſt and reaſonable, fit and becoming; 'tis a Duty which natural Reaſon dictates, as well as which is enjoin'd by the expreſs Command of God.

But if it be reaſonable that we ſhould obey, *in all things*, the Commands of our earthly Parents; who being but Men, and of like Paſſions and Infirmities with their Children, may, thro' Ignorance or Peeviſhneſs, or only for the Exerciſe of their

their own Power, lay upon their Children ſuch Commands as are hard and rigorous; difficult to be perform'd, and which, when done, may not tend in the leaſt to promote either their Children's Good, or their own; much more is it highly reaſonable that we ſhould, not only in all things, but alſo with all Readineſs and Chearfulneſs ſet our ſelves to obey the Commands of God, our heavenly Father; who not only, as he is our Father, has full Right and Authority to lay what Commands he pleaſes upon us, and to require our Obedience thereto, (even tho' they were hard and rigorous, and ſuch as no Reaſon or Account could be given of, beſides his own Will and Pleaſure only;) but who alſo infinitely exceeds, both in Wiſdom and Goodneſs, the wiſeſt and beſt Fathers upon Earth; upon which Accounts we may be aſſur'd that he never commands any thing but what is both reaſonable for him to require, and alſo very expedient, and much for our own Good to perform. *He hath ſhewed thee, O Man,* ſays the *Prophet, what is good; and what doth the Lord*

Lord thy God require of thee, but to do juſtly, and to love Mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God? Micah vi. 8. Theſe are all the Commands of our kind and indulgent Father; he enjoins us nothing but what is both good in it ſelf, and for our good: and therefore if we do not obey him in theſe Commands, as we ſhall ſhew our ſelves to be none of his obedient Children, ſo neither can we reaſonably hope that he will own us as ſuch, or be any longer a loving Father to us. *If*, ſays St. *Peter*, *ye call on the Father*, *i. e.* if ye call on God as your Father, *who, without Reſpect of Perſons, judgeth according to every Man's Work; paſs the time of your ſojourning here in Fear.* For indeed, with what Face can we preſume to call him *Father*, if we reject his fatherly Authority? Or how can we hope that he ſhould love us, and deal with us as good Children, while we refuſe to give him the Obedience of Sons?

(6.) Laſtly; the ſame Relation of a *Father*, which God bears to us, makes

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it likewiſe reaſonable for us to ſubmit with Meekneſs and Patience to all his Corrections. This Duty the *Author* to the *Hebrews* infers from this Relation, *Heb.* xii. 5, *&c.* and he alſo enforces it with ſuch Reaſons, grounded thereupon, that nothing more ſhall need to be ſaid upon this Head, but what we read there in the Apoſtle's own Words. *My Son, deſpiſe not thou the chaſtning of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chaſtneth, and ſcourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. If ye endure Chaſtning, God dealeth with you as with Sons; for what Son is he whom the Father chaſtneth not? But if ye be without Chaſtiſement, whereof all are Partakers, then are ye Baſtards, and not Sons. Farthermore, we have had Fathers of our Fleſh which corrected us, and we gave them Reverence; ſhall we not much rather be in Subjection to the Father of Spirits, and live? For they verily, for a few Days, chaſtned us after their own Pleaſure; but he, for our Profit; that we might*

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be Partakers of his Holineſs. Now no chaſtning, for the preſent, ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheleſs, afterward, it yeildeth the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed thereby; *Heb.* xii. 5—11. But,

2. As God is a Father, ſo he is alſo *Our Father*. We are taught to call him ſo in this Prayer; *Our Father*; that is, a Father not to our ſelves only, but to all the reſt of our Race. And the Conſideration of this may likewiſe remind us of, and ſtrongly enforce upon us, ſundry Duties. For,

(1.) If God be a *common Father* to *us all*, then *all we* are *Brethren*. His common Relation, as a *Father*, to us, unites us in a very near Relation to one another.

And if all Men are our Brethren, we are all ſo far in a State of Equality with each other. We ought not therefore to deſpiſe, reproach, or vilify any Perſon whatſoever; becauſe how much ſoever he may be our Inferior in ſome little worldly

Reſpects, he ſtands in the ſame Relation to God that we do. We ought not therefore, I ſay, to bear our ſelves high over others, as if they were our Slaves and Vaſſals; ſeeing that, in truth, they are our Brethren, and in all conſiderable Reſpects equal to our ſelves.

Moreover, God being our common Father, and all we, as his Children, Brethren to each other; we ought all, as the *Apoſtle* exhorts, to *love as Brethren*, to *be pitiful*, and to be *courteous* to each other. For that Brethren ſhould love one another, is ſo clear a Law of Nature, and ſo deeply engraven in all our Hearts, that none can be ignorant of it. And indeed, as there was no Need of an expreſs Revelation to enjoin a Duty ſo eaſy to be diſcern'd, and ſo well known; ſo I do not remember that there is any where, either in the *Old* or *New Teſtament*, in the Law or in the Goſpel, any poſitive Precept directly commanding it. It is rather, all along ſuppos'd and taken for granted, as a Duty which could not but be known and allow'd by all; that Brethren ought to love one another. There

There is indeed mention ſometimes made in Scripture, of *brotherly Love*; but it is not, I think, any where expreſſly commanded to be exerciſed by and between thoſe who (as being born of the ſame common Parents, according to the Fleſh;) are moſt properly called *Brethren*; becauſe, as it ſeems, there was no Need of a poſitive Command to oblige us to a Duty which Nature ſo clearly dictates, and ſo ſtrongly urges upon our Practice; but the Deſign of all thoſe Texts, which require the Exerciſe, or the Continuance of *brotherly Love*, is only to propoſe that Love which Brothers do naturally bear to each other, as the Pattern and Meaſure of that Love which all Men ought to bear to one another, even altho' they are not quite ſo nearly related together, as Brothers according to the Fleſh are.

(2.) If God be *our Father*, and *all we* are Brethren; ſeeing conſequently, he bears the ſame good Will to all of us, and we have all the ſame Needs and Wants, and the ſame common Requeſts

to make to God; it hence becomes our Duty, and a very reaſonable Duty too, to join together, as we have Opportunities, in great Numbers, to offer up our common Petitions to him. This is plainly moſt glorious to God; the Multitude of his Worſhippers, owning their Dependence upon him, beſt ſets forth the Largeneſs of his Dominion, and the Extent of his Power. And this is alſo beſt for our ſelves; becauſe the greater the Number is of thoſe who join together in Prayer, the better Aſſurance may they reaſonably entertain of the good Succeſs of their Prayer. For if it may well be preſumed that a good Father will not deny the reaſonable Requeſt of any *one* of his Children, much more may it be truſted to, and depended upon, that he will not deny the like reaſonable Requeſt of *all* his Children; or of a *great many* of them, when they join together in putting up the ſame common Petition to him.

(3.) If God be *our Father*; the Father, not of one, two, or a few Men, but of the

the whole Race of Mankind; then it plainly follows, that whether we pray with others, or by our ſelves, we ought always, even in our Prayers by our ſelves, and principally for our ſelves, to be mindful alſo of others, and to beg the ſame things of God for them, which we beg for our ſelves. Indeed we can't ever, either in publick or in private, put up this moſt excellent Prayer, taught us by our Lord himſelf, without doing ſo. For by ſtyling God *our Father*, we extend his fatherly Relation to others beſides our ſelves; and by ſaying give *us our* daily Bread, and forgive *us our* Treſpaſſes, and the like, we beg the ſame things for all thoſe to whom he is a Father, which we do for our ſelves.

And that thus we ought to do, and are taught to do in this Prayer, our Church likewiſe inſtructs us, in that ſhort Explication of it which ſhe has given in her Catechiſm, when in anſwer to that Queſtion, *What deſireſt thou of God in this Prayer?* The Scholar is taught to anſwer, *I deſire my Lord God, our heavenly Fa-*

ther, who is the Giver of all Goodneſs, to ſend his Grace unto me, and to all People. But,

3. Laſtly; as God is *a Father*, and *our Father*, ſo he is likewiſe our *heavenly Father*, or *Our Father which is in Heaven*, as we are here taught to call him; by which Phraſe, *which art in Heaven*, we acknowledge (as has been already ſhewed) the Greatneſs of God's Power, and the Extent of his Dominion. And the Duties which we learn from hence are chiefly theſe two.

(1.) To rely upon his Power, who being in Heaven over all, can do what he pleaſes; to believe firmly that nothing is too hard for him, that he is able to do whatever we deſire; and conſequently to truſt that all our Petitions ſhall be granted, if they be ſuch as are fit to be granted. And,

(2.) In Conſideration of the Greatneſs of his Majeſty, to lay our ſelves low before

fore him, to approach him with the profoundeſt Reverence, to demean our ſelves in his Preſence with the deepeſt Humility both of Body and Mind, and to beſpeak him in the moſt ſubmiſſive and reſpectful Expreſſions.

This Duty I inferr'd before, from the Conſideration of his being *our Father*; but that he is alſo infinitely advanc'd above us *in Heaven*, is a farther Enforcement of it. And for this Purpoſe, the ſerious Conſideration of this Point is very well urg'd by the *wiſe Man*, Eccleſ. v. 1, 2. *Keep thy Foot, i. e.* ſhew all poſſible Reverence, of Body as well as Mind, *when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God.——Be not raſh with thy Mouth, and let not thine Heart be haſty to utter any thing before God; for God is in Heaven, and thou upon Earth.*

To him therefore, God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghoſt, three Perſons and one God, be given always, as is moſt due, all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

HALLOWED BE Thy NAME, EXPLAINED.

HALLOWED

BY

THY NAME.

DISCOURSE L.

Hallowed be thy Name, explained.

MATTH. vi. 9. latter part.

——*Hallowed be thy Name.*

THE Prayer here taught by our *Saviour Chriſt* to his Diſciples, commonly called *the Lord's Prayer*, conſiſts (as I have formerly obſerved) of three principal parts; I. The Preface, which is a ſolemn Compellation or Invocation of God; *Our Father*

Father which art in Heaven: . II. The Body of the Prayer, which conſiſts of ſix Petitions: and, III. The Concluſion, which contains 1. A Doxology, or ſolemn Recognition or Acknowledgment of the Power and Majeſty of that God to whom we offer up our Petitions, *for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever:* and, 2. An Expreſſion of our hearty Concurrence and Agreement with every Clauſe of the foregoing Prayer, and of our Aſſurance of God's Power and Willingneſs to grant our Petitions, in the Word, *Amen.*

And the Method wherein I have already propos'd to treat of all theſe Particulars, is this;

I. I propounded, as I go along, to explain the Meaning of each Clauſe in this Prayer; to ſhew what it is, that therein, and thereby we are taught to acknowledge to, or to beg of God; or what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter the Words of this Prayer. And,

II. To

II. To mention the Duties, which, from the ſeveral Clauſes and Petitions of this Prayer, we are inſtructed in, and obliged to.

And in this Method I have already diſcourſed of the firſt part of this Prayer, *viz.* of the Preface; which is a ſolemn Compellation or Invocation of Almighty God, a Direction of our Speech to him, in theſe Words; *Our Father which art in Heaven.*

I proceed now in the next Place,

II. To diſcourſe of the ſecond part of this Prayer, which I call'd the Body of it; and that (as I have before obſerved) conſiſts of ſix Petitions; whereof the three firſt chiefly reſpect God's Glory, *hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come,* and *thy Will be done*; and the three laſt, our own Good; *give us this Day our daily Bread,* &c.

From which Order of theſe Petitions we may very well be reminded of that Duty which is taught us at the 33[d] ℣. of this

this Chapter, *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God, and his Righteouſneſs, and all theſe things ſhall be added unto you*; and by the *Apoſtle*, in 1 *Cor.* x. 33. *Whether ye eat or drink, or whatſoever ye do, do all to the Glory of God.*

In treating of theſe Petitions of the Lord's Prayer, I begin with the firſt of them; *hallowed be thy Name.*

And here (according to the Method before laid down,) I ſhall ſhew,

I. What Meaning we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in the Lord's Prayer; *hallowed be thy Name.* And,

II. What Duties we are inſtructed in from hence.

I. What Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in the Lord's Prayer; *hallowed be thy Name.*

And indeed this Petition ſeems to me the hardeſt to be underſtood of any in the Lord's Prayer, and the moſt like to be repeated

repeated by ſome of thoſe who uſe it, without underſtanding what they ſay; but nevertheleſs, the Meaning of it may, I ſuppoſe, in a very few Words, be made plain even to the meaneſt Capacities.

In order to which it is to be noted,

1. That the Name of God is moſt commonly, if not always, in holy Scripture, ſet to ſignify God himſelf. Thus, when 'tis ſaid in the third Commandment, *Thou ſhalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain*; the Meaning is, that we ſhould not invoke or call upon God to be a Witneſs to a Vanity, or a Falſhood; and ſo when in 1 *Kings* xviii. 24. *Elijah*, ſpeaking to the Prieſts of *Baal*, ſays, *Call ye on the Name of your Gods, and I will call on the Name of the Lord.* What he meant is plainly this, that they ſhould pray to their Gods to anſwer them by Fire, and that he would do the ſame to *Jehovah*, in order to ſatisfy the People, by the Succeſs of their Prayers, which was the true God; *the God that anſwereth by Fire, let him be God.* And ſo when

when in *Pſalm* xxi. 1. 'tis ſaid, *The Lord hear thee in the Day of Trouble, the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee*; 'tis evident that both theſe Clauſes mean the ſame thing; ſo that, *the Name of the God of Jacob defend thee*, is all one as if it had been ſaid, may the God of *Jacob* defend thee. And thus, (to name no more Inſtances of this,) in *Exod.* xxxiii. 19. when *Moſes* had deſired to ſee the Glory and Majeſty of God, that is, to ſee God himſelf; he is told by God, that it was impoſſible for him to be ſeen by mortal Eyes; but, ſays God, this I will do for thee; *I will make all my Goodneſs paſs before thee, and I will proclaim the Name of the Lord before thee*; *i. e.* I will declare to thee in Words, what are the glorious Excellencies and Perfections of my Nature; for ſo 'tis ſaid in *Exod.* xxxiv. 5, 6, 7. where this Promiſe was made good to *Moſes*; *the Lord deſcended in a Cloud, and ſtood with him there, and proclaimed the Name of the Lord; and the Lord paſſed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord God, merciful*

merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in Goodneſs and Truth, &c.

And this way of ſpeaking, *viz.* that by the Name of God ſhould be meant God himſelf, is not much different from our common way of ſpeaking, in which, by the mention of ſome Attribute or Property of a Man, we often mean his Perſon; or when we ſay, the *King's Majeſty*, we mean the King; tho' yet, in ſtrictneſs, the Perſon of the King, and his Dignity or Majeſty, are not the ſame; and ſo when we ſay, *his Worſhip*, *his Honour*, *his Highneſs*, *his Excellence*, or the like, what we mean by theſe Expreſſions, is, that Perſon who is worſhipful, or honourable, or high, or excellent.

When therefore we pray that God's Name may be hallowed, the Meaning is, that God himſelf may be hallowed.

But *hallowed*; what is that? What is it to hallow God, or to hallow the Name of God? This Word does not leſs need to be explained than the other.

2. Therefore 'tis to be noted, that to hallow a thing ſignifies either to make it holy by a Conſecration of it to religious Uſes, or elſe to uſe it as a holy thing after it is ſo conſecrated.

(1.) To hallow a thing, ſignifies, primarily, to ſeparate it, or to ſet it apart for ſacred Uſes. Thus we hallow a Church, when we ſolemnly appropriate any Edifice or Building to the Worſhip of God. Thus a Day is hallowed, when it is deſtin'd and appointed to the Exerciſe of Religion; and a Perſon is hallowed, when (in the Scripture Phraſe,) he is given to the Lord, as *Samuel* was, (1 *Sam.* i. 11.) *i. e.* when he is conſecrated, and ſolemnly devoted to God's Worſhip and Service.

And in this Senſe the Word is plainly uſed in the fourth Commandment, where 'tis ſaid, *in ſix Days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the Sea, and all that in them is, and reſted the ſeventh Day, wherefore the Lord bleſſed the Sabbath Day, and hallowed it*, Exod. xx. 11.

God *hallowed* it, *i. e.* for the Reaſon before mentioned; he made a Difference between that and other Days, and appointed that Day, on which he himſelf had reſted, to be kept by Men as an holy Day, in a Reſt from the common Labours of Life, and in the Exerciſes of Religion. God hallowed the ſeventh Day, by appropriating it to ſacred Uſes, and commanding Men to keep it holy.

(2.) A ſecondary Uſe of the Word, *hallow*, is to uſe as holy, a thing, which by ſuch ſolemn Conſecration or Dedication hath been ſeparated from common Uſes, and appropriated to God or Religion: and therefore, as God himſelf is ſaid to have hallowed the Sabbath Day, ſo he did likewiſe command Men to hallow it, as you may ſee in *Jer.* xvii. 22. *Hallow ye the Sabbath Day, as I commanded your Fathers.*

But the way wherein God did hallow it, and that wherein Men are to hallow it, are clearly different; God hallowed the Sabbath, when he ſet it apart, and

appropriated it to religious Uſes; when he commanded it to be kept as an holy Day to himſelf: and Men do hallow it, when they uſe it in ſuch manner as they are commanded to do, when they ſpend it in Religion, when they keep it as an holy Day ought to be kept. *If*, ſays God by the Prophet *Jeremy*, (in the 24th V. of the Chapter before cited,) *ye diligently hearken unto me, to bring in no Burden thro' the Gates of this City on the Sabbath Day, but hallow the Sabbath Day, to do no Work therein; then ſhall there enter into the Gates of this City Kings*, &c.

The Queſtion therefore is, in which of theſe two Senſes the Word *hallow* is uſed, in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer; *hallowed be thy Name*; whether we mean thereby to wiſh or deſire that God's Name, *i. e.* (as was ſaid before,) that God himſelf may be holy, or elſe that he may be treated as holy; and 'tis plain that it can well be underſtood in the firſt Senſe. For what is already, and can never be otherwiſe than it is, cannot be a proper Subject of

of a Wiſh or Petition. But God himſelf is holy, his Name is holy, and his Attributes are holy, and all things relating to him are holy; God is ſo eſſentially holy, that he cannot poſſibly be prophaned or polluted by Men or Devils, ſo as to loſe any thing of his infinite and eſſential Purity; and therefore 'tis needleſs for us to pray that God may be, or that he may continue holy in himſelf, for he can't be otherwiſe; he can no more ever ceaſe to be holy, than he can ceaſe to be God. All therefore which we can mean, when we pray that the Name of God (*i. e.* that God) may be hallowed, is, that he may be uſed and treated by Men according to his Nature; that as he is really in himſelf holy, ſo he may be eſteemed and worſhipped, and reverenced by Men as ſuch.

In ſhort, when we pray that God's Name may be hallowed or ſanctified, we expreſs our hearty Deſire that God may be worſhipped, honoured, and glorified by us, and by all his Creatures, as he ought to be; that he may ever be (as indeed he deſerves to be) moſt highly eſteemed and

reſpected by us; that he may receive from us, and from all Men, the Praiſe and Glory which is due to him.

This is the meaning of this Clauſe in the Lord's Prayer, *hallowed be thy Name*, if we underſtand it as a Prayer or Petition.

But this Sentence may be underſtood, as expreſſing our Acknowledgment of what is, as well as our Deſire of what may be; we, in uſing this Form of Speech, *hallowed be thy Name*, may well be underſtood, as thereby actually giving that Praiſe and Honour to God which is his Due, and which, at the ſame time, we deſire may be given him by all others.

For thus, when in the Contemplation of any Mercy, or good thing received from God, we ſay, *God be thanked*, or *praiſed be God*, or *bleſſed be the Name of God*, or the like; tho' theſe Phraſes are expreſſed in the Form of a Wiſh or Petition, (for to ſay, let ſuch a thing be ſo, or ſo, is all one as to ſay, we wiſh or deſire that it may be ſo, or ſo;) yet what we mean by theſe Phraſes, is, to acknowledge

ledge the good thing received to be the Gift of God, and to give him Thanks for the ſame. He who ſays, thanks be to God, means, I do give him Thanks; or if he ſays, praiſed be God, he means, I do praiſe him; or if he ſays, bleſſed be the Name of God, he means, I do bleſs his Name. And ſo I ſay here; when we uſe this Sentence in the Lord's Prayer, *hallowed be thy Name*, it may as well be underſtood by us as a Thankſgiving to God for Mercies receiv'd, as a Prayer that God may be honoured and glorified by us. And when the Sentence is ſo plainly capable of theſe two Senſes, I ſee no Reaſon why we ſhould not, but rather, I think there is great Reaſon that we ſhould, have them both in our Minds; and that whenever we repeat theſe Words, we ſhould do that our ſelves, which we ſeem to deſire may be done both by our ſelves and others; that is, that we ſhould then with a grateful Heart for the Mercies which we have receiv'd from God, actually render him that Praiſe, which (as being ſenſible it is

his Due,) we pray may be given him by us, and by all Men.

When therefore we uſe this Clauſe in the Lord's Prayer, *hallowed be thy Name*, this we ſhould mean to ſay, this Senſe we ſhould have in our Minds; "We are ſen-
"ſible, O Lord, how much we are enga-
"ged to thee for all the Expreſſions of
"thy Bounty; for our Life it ſelf, which
"we owe to thee our Father, from whom
"we receiv'd our Being; and for all the
"Comforts of our Life, the Fruits of thy
"fatherly Care and Protection: we there-
"fore praiſe and bleſs, and magnify thy
"Name for all thy Mercies; but we know
"we cannot praiſe thee ſo much as we
"ſhould do; thy glorious Name is exalt-
"ed above all Bleſſing and Praiſe; we
"pray thee therefore to increaſe our
"Thankfulneſs, that we may daily praiſe
"thee more and more. Let our Mouth
"ſhew forth thy Righteouſneſs and thy
"Salvation all the Day, for we know not
"the End thereof; and mayeſt thou alſo,
"O God, our heavenly Father, who art
"the Author and Giver of all good things,

"and

" and whoſe Mercies are over all thy " Works; (mayeſt thou) be known to all " the World, how great and how good " thou art; mayeſt thou be eſteemed and " loved, praiſed and honoured, glorified " and worſhipped, by us and by all Men, " as thou oughteſt to be; we know the " higheſt Praiſes are thy Due, and we " heartily deſire they may be given thee by " all." *Hallowed be thy Name.*

And now having explained the Meaning of this Clauſe or Petition in the Lord's Prayer, and ſhewn what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds when we utter theſe Words, I proceed in the ſecond Place, (according to the Method before laid down,)

II. To ſhew what Duties we are inſtructed in, and may learn from it.

And this is certain, that we ought at all times to endeavour that our ſelves, which we pray unto God for; and if we do not, it is a certain Sign that our Deſire of what we pray for is not ſincere and hearty: for what a Man earneſtly deſires, he naturally and of Courſe ſeeks to procure all

all the ways he can. And in any Caſe whatſoever, if a Man plainly neglects the neceſſary Means of obtaining a thing, it may be certainly concluded from thence, that he is not very ſollicitous about it, that he is not much concerned whether he has it or no. When therefore we are taught to pray that God's Name may be hallowed, we are taught at the ſame time to endeavour, all that lies in our Power, to procure to God, from our ſelves and from all his Creatures, that Worſhip, Glory, and Service, which, in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, we deſire may be given him by all. And,

1. Our Care muſt begin at home; if therefore we do indeed deſire that God may be honoured by all, with the Glory which is due unto him, we ought in the firſt Place to take Care that we our ſelves be not failing and deficient in this Duty; and above all, that we do never, in Word or Deed, do any thing which is repugnant to our own Petition.

As

As a part of the Duty, therefore, which we are inſtructed in, and oblig'd to, by our Uſe of this Clauſe of the Lord's Prayer; *hallowed be thy Name*; it is,

(1.) Firſt of all our indiſpenſable Duty to be very diligent and conſtant in the Worſhip of God, by which he is moſt directly honoured by Men; and eſpecially in his publick Worſhip, by which he is more honoured than by our private Service.

We ought therefore (and if we do indeed wiſh and deſire, as we pray, that God's Name may be hallowed, we can't do otherwiſe; we ought, I ſay,) to be very frequent in Thankſgivings to God for Mercies receiv'd, and in putting up our Requeſts to him for the good things which we want; for our ſole and whole Dependence is upon him; he is indeed the Author of all that we have, and 'tis from him only that we can receive all that we ſtand in need of: and therefore we our ſelves ſhall be deficient in giving him his due Honour, which in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer we deſire may be

be given by all, unleſs, as the *Apoſtle* directs, 1 *Theſſ.* v. 17, 18. we do *pray without ceaſing, and in every thing give Thanks:* unleſs (as he directs in another Place,) we do *in every thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thankſgiving, let our Requeſts be made known unto God,* Phil. iv. 6.

(2.) It is another Branch of the Duty which we are inſtructed in by this Clauſe of the Lord's Prayer, to be careful to worſhip God in ſuch a manner as he ought to be worſhipped; *i. e.* as our *Saviour* directs, in *Joh.* iv. 23, 24. *in Spirit and in Truth. The Hour cometh,* ſays he, *and now is, when the true Worſhippers ſhall worſhip the Father in Spirit and in Truth; for the Father ſeeketh ſuch to worſhip him: God is a Spirit, and they that worſhip him* (*i. e.* they who would worſhip him acceptably,) *muſt worſhip him in Spirit and in Truth. i. e.* We muſt worſhip him in a manner agreeable to his Nature, and according to his own Directions; being a Spirit, we muſt worſhip

ſhip him as a Spirit, and with our Spirits; we muſt not entertain groſs Conceptions and Notions of God in our Minds, as the *Heathens* did, conceiving him to be like unto a Man, or unto any thing elſe which is viſible by corporeal Eyes, for this is to *change the Glory of the uncorruptible God into an Image made like to corruptible Man, and to Birds, and four-footed Beaſts, and creeping things*, Rom. i. 23. Neither muſt we think to pleaſe him, who is a pure Spirit, and ſees perfectly thro' us, with the Service of our Lips, without the Service of our Heart. And if we do not obſerve theſe, and ſuch other Directions as are given us in the holy Scripture, concerning God's Worſhip, our Worſhip it ſelf, by which we pretend, and would ſeem to honour him, will indeed be diſhonourable to him, the Manner of our Prayers will deſtroy the Matter of them; and we ſhall contradict our own Petitions, when we ſay, *hallowed be thy Name.*

(3.) A farther Branch of this Duty of hallowing God, or hallowing the Name of God,

God, is to ſhew a due Reſpect and Reverence to all things which are conſecrated to God, to all things which have Relation to him, to all things upon which his holy Name is called.

Thus then we are to comply with our own Deſire and Petition, that God may be hallowed or ſanctified,

1*ſt.* By giving Reverence, for his Sake, to the *Places* conſecrated to his Worſhip, according to that Precept in *Lev.* xix. 30. *Ye ſhall reverence my Sanctuary, I am the Lord.* And as a Token of our juſt Reverence to the Sanctuary, or Houſe of God, it is our Duty conſtantly to frequent the Places appointed for his publick Worſhip, and to behave our ſelves reverently therein, according to the Direction of the *wiſe Man*, Eccleſ. v. 1. *Keep thy Foot when thou goeſt to the Houſe of God.*

2*dly.* The ſame we are to do to the *Times* ſet apart for Religion; *Ye ſhall keep my Sabbaths, and reverence my Sanctuary*; ſo 'tis commanded in the Law before

fore cited. And this we do, when we forbear (as much as may be) our ſecular Works and Employments upon the Days which are conſecrated and ſet apart for God's Service, and ſpend the ſame in Works of Piety and Charity.

3*dly*. The like Reverence and Reſpect we are likewiſe to ſhew to the *holy Word* of God, by diligent Study of the holy Scripture; by taking Delight in the Law of the Lord, and meditating therein Day and Night, (*Pſal.* i. 2.) by taking good Heed thereto, and receiving it as the Oracles of God; by readily and heartily believing all the Doctrines which it teaches, and diligently practiſing all the good Leſſons which we learn from thence.

4*thly*. And laſtly; we do honour to God, when, for his Sake, we give Honour and Reſpect to his *Miniſters*, giving Heed to their good Inſtructions, learning the Law from their Mouth, following their godly Admonitions, imitating their virtuous Examples, and eſteeming them very highly

in

in Love for their Works ſake; *i. e.* upon the Account of the Relation which they have to God, as his Meſſengers and Embaſſadors, and for the Sake of thoſe good Offices which they do to Men. But,

(4.) And above all, that Branch of Duty, which our uſing this Clauſe or Petition to God, *hallowed be thy Name*, doth moſt ſtrongly enforce upon our Practice, is to be nicely careful never to do or ſpeak any thing which is diſhonourable to God. If we pray that God's Name may be hallowed, then we our ſelves, to be ſure, ought not to prophane it; by blaſpheming God; by denying any of his eſſential and glorious Attributes; by carping at, and cenſuring the Adminiſtrations of his Providence; by affirming any thing of him, or aſcribing any thing to him, which is diſhonourable, and apt to beget in the Minds, either of our ſelves or others, mean and unworthy, and diſreſpectful Thoughts of him; by invoking him as a Witneſs, either to a Falſhood or a trifling Matter; *i. e.* by falſe, raſh, or vain Swearing,

ing, or the like; for while we do by any of theſe, or the like Practices, diſhonour God in our own Perſons, we cannot uſe this Clauſe of the Lord's Prayer, and ſay, *hallowed be thy Name*, without the vileſt Hypocriſy, and ſuch as will render both our Perſons and our Prayers odious and abominable to God; becauſe our own Practice does moſt flatly contradict our Petition, which is a certain Argument that our Petition is not ſerious; for if we did deſire heartily what we pray for, it is impoſſible that we ſhould freely allow our ſelves to act or ſpeak contrary to our own Deſires. But,

2. Tho' our Care of hallowing God's Name muſt begin at home, it muſt not end there; for when we pray in the Lord's Prayer that God's Name may be hallowed, we pray that it may be hallowed not by our ſelves only, but by *all Men*; and whatever we pray for, we ought alſo our ſelves to endeavour after.

Now indeed we have not ſuch Power over other Men, as to make them ſpeak or

do as we would have them; their Tongues are their own, and their Hands are their own, and they will ſay and do with them what they pleaſe themſelves, and it is not in us to controul or reſtrain them. But nevertheleſs, tho' we can't of our ſelves, by our own Power, fully accompliſh our own Deſires in this Petition, we may contribute ſomewhat towards it; and tho' after all our Endeavours, and the utmoſt Expreſſions of our Zeal for God's Glory, it is to be feared that God will not be ſo much honoured and reſpected by all as he ought to be; he may yet, by means of our Endeavours to advance his Honour in the World, be more honoured and reſpected than otherwiſe he would be. Whether our Zeal for God will have the good Succeſs we deſire, we cannot tell, but however, the probable Hope that it will have ſome good Succeſs, is a ſufficient Encouragement to excite us to do all we can toward the fulfilling of our own Petition, that the Name of God may be hallowed; *i. e.* that God may be worſhipped and reverenc'd as he ought to be, not by our ſelves

ſelves only, but by the whole Race of Mankind, and by all other Creatures which are capable of knowing, loving, and ſerving him.

And the proper Means to procure the Glory of God, or the particular Duties, which in Compliance with our own Petition, when we ſay, *hallowed be thy Name*, we are oblig'd to, in order to procure to God that Worſhip and Reverence from other Men, which is due to him, are ſuch as theſe,

(1.) In order to this, 'tis our Duty to declare to others, upon all Occaſions, the glorious Attributes, and the wonderful Works of God; according to the Direction and Example of the holy *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. xcvi. 3--9. *Declare his Glory among the Heathen, his Wonders among all People; for the Lord is great, and greatly to be praiſed; he is to be feared above all Gods; for all the Gods of the Nations are Idols; but the Lord made the Heavens; Honour and Majeſty are before him, Strength and Beauty are in*

his Sanctuary. Give unto the Lord, O ye Kindreds of the People, give unto the Lord Glory and Strength; give unto the Lord the Glory due unto his Name; bring an Offering, and come into his Courts: O worſhip the Lord in the Beauty of Holineſs; fear before him, all the Earth.

(2.) In Order to this, it is likewiſe our Duty to ſtand up in Defence of God and Religion, againſt a looſe, ungodly, and atheiſtical Generation of Men, by aſſerting the Righteouſneſs and Equity of his Laws, and vindicating the Juſtice and Wiſdom of his Providence.

And I believe the Practice of this Duty was never more ſeaſonable and neceſſary than in this Age in which 'tis our Lot to be caſt; for we live amongſt thoſe, who tho' baptized into the Chriſtian Faith, and profeſſing themſelves Diſciples of *Chriſt*, are yet bold enough to queſtion not only ſome of the fundamental Articles of the Chriſtian Belief, but the Foundation it ſelf, the Authority and Credi-

Credibility of all divine Revelation, and who would fain reduce the World to that State of Darkneſs and Ignorance which it was in before the preaching of Chriſtianity.

This therefore is a proper Time for us to *contend earneſtly for the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, as St. *Jude* exhorts in the 3d ℣. of his Epiſtle; there being (as he adds in the next Words,) *certain Men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this Condemnation; ungodly Men, turning the Grace of our God into Laſciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.*

In Order therefore to be able to make Oppoſition to theſe Enemies of our Religion, it is our Duty to be diligent in the Reading and Study of the holy Scripture, which is *able to make us wiſe unto Salvation*; which *is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Inſtruction in Righteouſneſs, that the Man of God may be perfect, throughly furniſhed unto all good Works.*

And we ſhould do well beſides, as we have Opportunity and Ability, to ſtudy and to fix well in our Minds thoſe Precepts and Arguments whereby the Truth of Chriſtianity, and the divine Authority of the holy Scripture, have with good Succeſs been maintained and aſſerted, in all Ages, by the Champions of Chriſtianity, againſt all Oppoſers; that ſo being well rooted in Religion our ſelves, we may be the better able to convince Gainſayers; and, as the *Apoſtle* exhorts, 1 *Pet.* iii. 15. may *be ready always to give an Anſwer to every Man that asketh us a Reaſon of the Hope that is in us.*

But this is not in every Man's Power; all have not Leiſure or Parts to qualify themſelves thus to aſſert and maintain the Honour of God, and the Truth of Religion, againſt Gainſayers. I add therefore, in the third and laſt Place,

(3.) Another Means of gaining Glory to God from others, which all Perſons, even thoſe of the meaneſt Capacities, may

may and ought to uſe for this Purpoſe; and that is, the glorious Light of a good Example; by which we may at once both inſtruct others in their Duty, and make them in Love with the Beauties of Virtue and Religion; and ſo procure Glory to God by the Converſion and Salvation of Men; according to that Precept and Direction of our *Saviour*, in *Matth.* v. 16. *Let your Light ſo ſhine before Men, that they may ſee your good Works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven.*

For then God is beſt glorifyed, his Name is then moſt hallowed by Men, when they confeſs his Power, and Greatneſs, and Dominion, by ſubmitting to his Laws, and ſetting themſelves to pleaſe him in all things; according to that of our *Saviour*, John xv. 8. *Herein is my Father glorifyed, that ye bear much Fruit*; to the ſame Purpoſe is that of the *Apoſtle*, Phil. i. 11. *being filled with the Fruits of Righteouſneſs, which are—— unto the Glory and Praiſe of God.*

Thus have I ſhewn what it is to *hallow* the *Name of God*; what we deſire when we repeat this Petition, *hallowed be thy Name*; and in what manner we our ſelves ought to endeavour the Accompliſhment of our own Deſires.

And to the King eternal, immortal, inviſible, the only wiſe God, be given by us and by all Men, not only with our Lips, but in our Lives, all Honour and Glory, now and for evermore. Amen.

THY

THY
KINGDOM Come,
EXPLAINED.

DISCOURSE IV.

Thy Kingdom come, explained.

MATTH. vi. 10.

Thy Kingdom come; thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven.

THY *Kingdome come.* In the Lord's Prayer, as I have already obſerved, there are three principal Parts; the Preface, or Invocation; the Body of the Prayer; and the Concluſion.

And the Body of the Prayer conſiſts of ſix Petitions; the three firſt of which reſpect chiefly God's Glory, and the three laſt our own Good.

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The three firſt, which reſpect chiefly God's Glory, are theſe, *hallowed be thy Name, thy Kingdom come,* and *thy Will be done in Earth as it is in Heaven.*

Of the firſt of which I diſcourſed the laſt time; I proceed now to the ſecond, *thy Kingdom come.*

In ſpeaking of which I ſhall obſerve the ſame Method as before; that is,

I. I ſhall explain the Meaning of it, or ſhew what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God; what it is which we deſire of God when we ſay, *thy Kingdom come.* And,

II. I ſhall ſhew what Duties we may learn, and are inſtructed in, by our Uſe of this Petition.

I. I ſhall explain the Meaning of it, or ſhew what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God; what it is which we deſire of God when we ſay, *thy Kingdom come.*

Now

Now the Kingdom of God may be underſtood generally, or ſpecially. Underſtanding it generally, by the Kingdom of God, is meant that ſovereign Power and Dominion, which he, as the great Creator of all things, hath over all his Creatures; upholding all things by the Word of his Power, and directing and ordering, by his wiſe Providence, all the Affairs of the World, according to his own Pleaſure; as 'tis ſaid, *Pſal.* ciii. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all.*

But, underſtanding the Phraſe thus, it cannot be a proper Subject of Petition to God, to pray that his Kingdom may come, becauſe it is come already; for *he doth now according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him, what doeſt thou?* as 'tis ſaid, *Dan.* iv. 35. And this Kingdom of God is not lately begun, but was from all Eternity, and it will continue for ever; for as 'tis ſaid in the ℣. juſt before, *his Dominion is an everlaſting Dominion, and*

and his Kingdom is from Generation to Generation, Pſal. cxlv. 13. And the *Pſalmiſt*, ſpeaking of this Kingdom of God, whereby with undoubted Right, and an infinite and uncontroulable Power, he governs and diſpoſes all things according to his own Will, ſays, that *the Lord is King for ever and ever*, Pſal. x. 16. and that *the Lord ſhall reign for ever*, Pſal. cxlvi. 10. For this Kingdom of God being founded in his own infinite and eternal Perfections, as it never had beginning, ſo it never can have an end; neither is it capable of any Increaſe or Diminution.

To pray therefore that this Kingdom of God may come, would not be good Senſe, for 'tis abſurd to wiſh that a thing may be, which is already, and can never be otherwiſe than it is.

Beſides, our very putting up our Petitions to him, as God, ſuppoſes that he is the Sovereign Lord of all; ſo that if this were the Senſe of this Petition, the Ground of our Petition, and the Matter of it would be inconſiſtent; for if we pray that the Kingdom of God (taking it in this Senſe,)

may

may come, we ſeem to ſuppoſe that it is not come already; *i. e.* that he is not as yet ſo great a King as we wiſh he may be; and yet, by the very putting up this, or indeed any other Requeſt to him, as God, we muſt be ſuppoſed to believe that he is God; *i. e.* that he is already the Sovereign Lord of the whole World, of infinite Fulneſs, Power and Perfection, able to grant us whatever we deſire of him.

And laſtly, when we put up this Prayer to God, called the Lord's Prayer, it is a thing which not only we muſt be ſuppos'd to believe, that his Kingdom is come, but which we alſo expreſſly own and profeſs our Belief of, both in the Preface of the Prayer, and in the Concluſion of it; in the Preface, when we ſtyle him, our Father *which is in Heaven*; and in the Concluſion, when we ſay, *for thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever.* It is plain therefore that——

The coming, or the Exiſtence of God's Kingdom, taken in this Senſe, is not a proper Subject of Petition, but rather of Rejoicing and Gratulation, and Thankſgiving;

ving; according to thoſe Paſſages which we meet with in the *Pſalms*. *The Lord reigneth; let the Earth rejoice; let the Multitude of the Iſles be glad thereof*, *Pſal.* xcvii. 1. And again, *O come let us ſing unto the Lord, let us make a joyful Noiſe to the Rock of our Salvation; let us come before his Preſence with Thankſgiving, and make a joiful Noiſe unto him with Pſalms; for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all Gods*, *Pſal.* xcv. 1, 2, 3. And again, *The Lord is great, and greatly to be praiſed; he is to be feared above all Gods*, Pſal. xcvi. 4. *I know that the Lord is great, and that our Lord is above all Gods. Whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he, in Heaven and Earth, in the Seas, and all deep Places*, Pſal. cxxxv. 5, 6.

This Kingdom of God therefore being already come, or rather, having always been, and being what will be for ever; we are ſtill to ſeek, what that Kingdom of God is which we pray may come, and which conſequently we muſt ſuppoſe to be not come already, or at leaſt not to be yet

yet ſettled and eſtabliſhed in that Fullneſs and Perfection which we hope it will have.

And I obſerved before, that the Kingdom of God is ſometimes taken ſpecially; *i. e.* not for that Power and Sovereignty which he by Right has over all, but for that free and voluntary Subjection which ought to be paid him by us, and all his other Creatures which he hath endued with Reaſon, and a Capacity to acknowledge his Sovereignty and Dominion.

And this Kingdom of God is twofold; his Kingdom of Grace, and his Kingdom of Glory: the coming of both which we may well enough be underſtood to mean, when we put up this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, and ſay, *thy Kingdom come.*

1. By the Kingdom of God, in Scripture, is oftentimes meant his Kingdom of Grace; or the Profeſſion of the true Religion, and the Goſpel of *Chriſt*, and a Practice correſpondent thereto; or, in other Words, by the Kingdom of God is meant the State of the Goſpel, that Kingdom which God exerciſes peculiarly in his Church, inſtruct-

ing it by his Word, guiding and governing it by his Spirit, and preſerving and protecting it by his Power and Providence; which is therefore by *Divines* called God's *Kingdom* of *Grace*, becauſe it is founded, not in God's abſolute Power, but in a Covenant of Grace conſented to by both Parties, by which the Subjects of this Kingdom engage to take him for their God, and he engages to take them for his People; and which is therefore call'd a Covenant of Grace, partly becauſe it it mere Grace and Favour in God, that he is pleas'd to make any Engagement or Promiſe to Men; and partly, becauſe the Conditions of this Covenant, on God's part, are very gracious, they are more advantagious to us than we could reaſonably expect or deſire: and becauſe alſo the Conditions thereof on our Part are likewiſe very gracious, they are much eaſier and gentler than God might have required of us; and therefore the *Apoſtle*, ſpeaking of *Chriſtians*, the ſpecial Subjects of this ſpiritual Kingdom of God, ſays, *Rom.* vi. 14. *Ye are not under the Law*, (which required ſtrict and unſinning

unſinning Obedience,) *but under Grace*; *i. e.* under ſuch a Covenant as is gracious, and exacts leſs from you than God might have done, and makes Allowances for humane Weakneſs, and diſpenſes Pardon to repenting Sinners; and therefore St. *John* ſays, *Ch.* i. ℣. 17. *The Law was given by Moſes, but Grace and Truth came by Jeſus Chriſt.*

And by the Kingdom of God, when it is taken in this Senſe, may be meant either his external or his internal Kingdom. Or indeed I do not ſee why we may not at the ſame time underſtand both of them, when there is no Reaſon to reſtrain it only to one, as I think there is not in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer.

(1.) The external Kingdom of God is the outward Profeſſion of the true Religion; in which Senſe the State of the *Jews*, to whom the Law was given by *Moſes*, and who for a time were the peculiar People of God, might then not improperly be called the Kingdom of God; the reſt of the World being then overſpread with

Darkneſs and Ignorance, and ſerving Devils inſtead of God.

But now ſince the Abolition of that Law, and the Revelation of the Goſpel, the Chriſtian Religion, or the Preaching and Profeſſion of the Goſpel, is the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven; for both theſe Phraſes are uſed in Scripture promiſcuouſly: in this Senſe this Phraſe is uſed by St. *John Baptiſt*, Matth. iii. 2. *In thoſe Days came John the Baptiſt, preaching in the Wilderneſs of Judea, and ſaying, Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand. The Kingdom of Heaven is at Hand*; *i. e.* the Kingdom or Reign of the *Meſſiah* is now approaching; that Kingdom which God will exerciſe among Men, by the Preaching and Mediation of his Son. And thus likewiſe our *Saviour* uſes the Phraſe, in *Matth.* xxi. 43. where, having reproved the Incredulity of the *Jews*, for not receiving the Goſpel which he preached, (under the Parable of an Houſholder, who ſent his Servants one after another, and laſt of all his Son, to the Husbandmen, to whom he had let out his Vineyard,

Vineyard, to receive the Fruits thereof, and they, as faſt as they came, perſecuted and ſlew them, not ſparing even the Son himſelf;) our *Saviour* there threatens them, that as a Puniſhment of their baſe and barbarous Uſage of the ſeveral Meſſengers which God had ſent unto them; *the Kingdom of God ſhould be taken from them. Therefore, I ſay unto you, the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and ſhall be given to a Nation bringing forth the Fruits thereof. The Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you*; *i. e.* ſince you have been ſo unfruitful under the Means of Grace, you ſhall now enjoy them no longer; God hath hitherto had his viſible Church among you; *he hath ſhewed his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and his Judgments unto Iſrael; he hath not dealt ſo with any Nation, and as for his Judgments they have not known them*, Pſal. cxlvii. 19. But now he will remove his Kingdom, *i. e.* his viſible Church, elſewhere; he will *call thoſe his People that were not his People, and thoſe beloved that were not beloved*; and you who

were once his choſen and peculiar People he will reject and caſt off. This is plainly our *Saviour*'s Meaning in that Paſſage, *the Kingdom of God ſhall be taken from you, and ſhall be given to another Nation:* 'tis as if he had ſaid, You ſhall no longer enjoy the Profeſſion of the true Religion, as you have hitherto done; but he will make known his Will and his Law to other People, who have been hitherto ignorant of him, and eſtabliſh his Church among them.

Now if by the Kingdom of God, here in the Lord's Prayer, we underſtand this external Kingdom, or the viſible Church of *Chriſt*, then our Meaning in this Petition, when we pray that God's Kingdom may come, is this; we deſire of God that he would be pleaſed to enlarge the Bounds of his Church, that he would cauſe his Goſpel to be preached, and the glorious Light thereof to ſhine among all Nations; we pray that all the dark Corners of the World may ſee the Salvation of God, that all *the Kingdoms of this World* may *become the Kingdoms of our Lord*, (Rev. ii. 15.) and

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of his *Chriſt*; and that all the People of the World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, may be united in one Sheep-fold, under one Shepherd, the Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*. But,

(2.) By the Kingdom of God, when we mean thereby the Kingdom of Grace, we may underſtand the internal and ſpiritual Kingdom of *Chriſt*; *i. e.* when *Chriſt* does not only rule in the World, by Mens outwardly profeſſing his Religion, and calling themſelves the Subjects of his Kingdom; but when he alſo reigns and rules in their Hearts; when all who confeſs his Name do ſincerely give up themſelves to obey his Laws, and do heartily endeavour to live as becomes the Goſpel of *Chriſt*; when they are his Subjects, not only in Shew and Profeſſion, but in Deed and in Truth; when they are *Chriſtians* in Heart, as well as in Name, and ſincerely practiſe the Religion which they profeſs.

And in this Senſe our *Saviour* himſelf uſes, or rather interprets this Phraſe, *the Kingdom of God*; (*Luke* xvii. 20, 21.) when being demanded by the *Phariſees*

when the Kingdom of God ſhould come? (which they underſtood in a carnal Senſe, meaning, by the Kingdom of God, a temporal Kingdom upon Earth, which they thought God did intend in a ſhort time to eſtabliſh; making the *Jews*, under their King the *Meſſiah*, the Head of an univerſal Monarchy;) he anſwered them, and ſaid, *the Kingdom of God cometh not with Obſervation; neither ſhall they ſay, lo here, or lo there; for behold the Kingdom of God is within you*; *i. e.* that is truly the Kingdom of God, when God reigns and rules in the Hearts of Men, and they do inwardly, and from the Heart, yield themſelves ſincerely obedient to him. And the ſame thing is plainly meant by the Kingdom of God, *Rom.* xiv. 17. *The Kingdom of God is not Meat and Drink, but Righteouſneſs and Peace, and Joy in the Holy Ghoſt.*

Now if by the Kingdom of God, here in the Lord's Prayer, which we deſire may come, we underſtand this internal and ſpiritual Kingdom of *Chriſt*, whereby he rules in the Hearts of Men, ſubduing their

their Wills to the Obedience of Faith; then what we deſire of God, when we utter the Words of this Petition, is this; that he would be pleaſed to grant ſuch a Meaſure of his Grace to all Men, and eſpecially to all thoſe who do profeſs his true Religion, that they may all live anſwerably to their Profeſſion; that all who are Members of the viſible Church or Kingdom of *Chriſt*, may be likewiſe Members of his ſpiritual Kingdom, may entirely ſubmit themſelves to him in all things, and obey from the Heart all the Laws of his holy Inſtitution: or, in the Words ſometime uſed in our Liturgy, that the *whole Church* of *Chriſt may be ſo guided and governed by* his *good Spirt, that all who profeſs and call themſelves Chriſtians, may be led into the way of Truth, and hold the Faith in Unity of Spirit, in the Bond of Peace, and in Righteouſneſs of Life.*

Thus we are to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom of Grace; *i.e.* that all the World may be brought both to the Profeſſion and Practice of the true Religion; that the

the Goſpel of *Chriſt* may be preached to the whole World; and that all who hear it may heartily receive and embrace it, and lead their Lives according to it; that they may all be, both in Profeſſion and in Truth, the Diſciples of *Chriſt*. But,

2. As God hath a Kingdom of Grace, ſo he hath likewiſe a Kingdom of Glory; and tho' the former be (as I ſuppoſe) what was principally meant in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, wherein we pray that his Kingdom may come; yet I ſee no Reaſon why we may not underſtand the Words in ſo large a Senſe as to comprehend this other too.

Now God's Kingdom of Glory is at the end of the World, when he ſhall come in Judgment to reward the Obedience of his faithful Servants; and *in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on them that knew not God, and obeyed not the Goſpel of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*; when all the Kingdoms of the World ſhall *become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Chriſt*, and he ſhall reign for ever; as 'tis ſaid in *Rev.* xi. 15.

xi. 15. Nay, when the *Son alſo himſelf ſhall deliver up the Kingdom to God, even the Father*, and *ſhall be ſubject unto him that before did put all things under him, that God may be all in all*; as 'tis ſaid, 1 *Cor.* xv. 24, 28.

But now taking the Kingdom of God, in this Senſe, for his Kingdom of Glory; when we pray for the coming of this Kingdom of God, we cannot put up the Petition in this Senſe, abſolutely, but in Subordination to the other Senſe of it. For to pray abſolutely that God would put an end to this State of things, that he would cut the Years of this World ſhort, and haſten the Day of his Vengeance, is in Effect to pray for the Deſtruction of Sinners; and ſuch a Petition as this, cannot be put up to God without Breach of Charity towards Men, whoſe Salvation we ought to deſire, and conſequently ſhould be glad of God's Long-ſuffering towards them, which we hope will bring them to Repentance. And therefore we are firſt to pray for the coming of God's Kingdom of Grace, and then for the coming of his

Kingdom

Kingdom of Glory; we are firſt to pray that the Goſpel may be preached to, and heartily receiv'd by all; and then, when the Number of the Elect is filled up, we may pray that his Kingdom of Glory may alſo come; that is, that bleſſed time, when they who are dead in the Lord ſhall receive the Reward of their Labours; when the Promiſes of God ſhall be made good to all his faithful Servants; when they who ſuffered for him here, ſhall reign with him in his eternal Glory; when the Glory of his Majeſty, and the Wiſdom of his Providence, and the Riches of his Love, and the Exactneſs of his Juſtice, ſhall be made manifeſt to all the World; when the Devil ſhall be for ever bound in the infernal Lake, and Sin, and Death, and all our ſpiritual Enemies, ſhall be perfectly ſubdued, and utterly deſtroyed; when we ſhall be made Kings and Prieſts unto God, and live for ever with him in the happy Regions of unſpeakable Felicity. And this is what we ought to pray for, and earneſtly to deſire; for 'tis given as part of the Character of a good Chriſtian,

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in the holy Scripture, that he *waits for the coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, 1 Cor. i. 7. that he *looks for the Saviour, the Lord Jeſus Chriſt from Heaven*, Phil. iii. 20. that he *loves his appearing*, 2 Tim. iv. 8. that he *looks for the bleſſed Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jeſus Chriſt*, Tit. ii. 13.

In ſhort then; when we uſe this Paſſage in the Lord's Prayer, *thy Kingdom come*, this is the Senſe which we ought to have in our Minds: "May'ſt thou, O God, "who art indeed the King over all the "World, may'ſt thou be owned as King "by all; may all Mankind profeſs Sub-"jection to thee; and may thy Grace ſo "rule in the Hearts of all, that they may "be entirely ſubject to thee, and ſincere-"ly obey thee; and then may that bleſ-"ſed time alſo haſten, when all who have "here owned thee for their King, ſhall "reign for ever with thee in thy everlaſt-"ing Glory." *Thy Kingdom come.*

And now having ſufficiently explained this Petition, and ſhewn what Senſe we ought

ought to have in our Minds, when we utter these Words in Prayer to God; I proceed, (according to the Method before laid down,)

II. To shew what Duties we may learn, and be instructed in, and are oblig'd to, by our Use of this Petition; *thy Kingdom come*; and they are chiefly these which follow.

1. As we pray that God's Kingdom may come, *i. e.* that the Bounds of the *Christian* Church may be enlarged; we ought by all the ways we can, to endeavour the Accomplishment of our own Petition; for he who prays for that which he will be at no Pains to compass, may well be presumed not to desire what he prays for.

In Compliance therefore with our own Petition, when we say, *thy Kingdom come*, we ought to use all the Means which are in our Power, to increase and propagate the Christian Faith, and to make Proselytes to it.

It was therefore a Duty ſpecially incumbent on the *Apoſtles* and immediate Diſciples of our Lord, to whom the Uſe of this Prayer was firſt commanded, to be faithful and diligent in the Execution of that Commiſſion which was given them by our Lord, juſt before his Aſcenſion, to *go into all the World, and to preach the Goſpel to every Creature*, Mark xvi. 15. and to *diſciple all Nations, baptizing them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever he had commanded them*, Matth. xxviii. 19, 20. And,

'Tis ſtill, in order to the ſame End, the Duty of all Miniſters of the Goſpel, according to the Direction given by St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, to *preach the Word*, to be *inſtant in Seaſon and out of Seaſon*, to *reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all Long-ſuffering and Doctrine*, 2 Tim. iv. 2.

And laſtly, it was always, and ever will be the Duty of all *Chriſtians*, in order to enlarge this Kingdom of God and of *Chriſt*, to let their *Light ſo ſhine before Men, that others ſeeing their good Works, may glorify*

glorify their Father which is in Heaven, according to the Direction of our *Saviour*, in *Matth.* v. 16.

'Tis indeed a thing utterly inconsistent with Sincerity, in putting up this Petition to God, *that his Kingdom may come*, for any of us, who make this a part of our Prayer, to allow our selves in any scandalous Practices, whereby the Minds of those who are Aliens to our holy Religion may be justly prejudiced against it, whereby the Enemies of God may be made to blaspheme, and by Reason whereof our excellent Religion will be in Danger to be evil spoken of among the Heathens.

And on the other side, it is our indispensable Duty to endeavour to recommend our most holy Profession to the Judgment and Esteem of Mankind, by a Conversation becoming the Gospel of *Christ*, by a blameless and an exemplary Life; and by this Argument, Persons of all Orders and Degrees are frequently in holy Scripture exhorted to great Strictness and Regularity in their Behaviour. The *aged Women* are to *be in Behaviour as becometh*

eth Holineſs, —— *that they may teach the younger Women to be ſober, to love their Husbands, to love their Children; to be diſcreet, chaſte, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own Husbands*; and all this to the End *that the Word of God be not blaſphemed*, Tit. ii. 3, &c. Nay, even *Servants* (Perſons of the meaneſt Rank, whoſe Converſation may be thought to be leaſt regarded, whoſe Miſbehaviour may be thought the leaſt ſcandalous; even *Servants*, I ſay,) are to behave themſelves orderly and honeſtly in their Stations, to *count their own Maſters worthy of all Honour*, and that to this End, *that the Name of God and his Doctrine be not blaſphemed*, 1 Tim. vi. 1. they are to be *obedient unto their own Maſters, and to pleaſe them well in all things; not anſwering again, not purloining, but ſhewing all good Fidelity*; and that to this Purpoſe, *that they may adorn the Doctrine of God our Saviour in all things*, Tit. ii. 9, &c. And 'tis the Duty of all *Chriſtians* whatſoever, as we are taught by St. *Peter*, 1 Epiſt. iii. 15, 16.

to *ſanctify the Lord God in their Hearts*, —and to *keep a good Conſcience*; that *they that ſpeak Evil of* them as *Evil-Doers, may be aſhamed*, when it ſhall appear that they do *falſely accuſe their good Converſation in Chriſt:* 'tis the Duty of all *Chriſtians*, to *have* their *Converſation honeſt among the Gentiles*, that even thoſe who *ſpeak againſt them as Evil-Doers, may, by their good Works which they ſhall behold, glorify God*; as we are taught by the ſame *Apoſtle*, in the ſecond Chapter of that *Epiſtle*, at the 12th ℣.

It was this, I mean the holy and blameleſs, and exemplary Lives of the Apoſtles, and firſt Converts to Chriſtianity, which was in great Meaſure the Cauſe of its ſpreading ſo faſt as it did at firſt; and without this, all the Zeal of the *Apoſtles* in preaching the Goſpel, and all the Miracles whereby their Preaching and Teſtimony was confirmed would have avail'd but little.

For Men may be zealous in a bad Cauſe as well as in a good one; for thus the *Phariſees* did *compaſs Sea and Land to make one Proſelyte*, only to make him *two-fold more*

the Child of Hell than themſelves; as our *Saviour* obſerves, *Matth.* xxiii. 15. And Miracles may be, and have been wrought for the Confirmation of a falſe Worſhip, as is intimated both by *Moſes*, *Deut.* xiii. 1,2. and by our *Saviour*, *Matth.* xxiv. 24. So that whether any Religion be from God, cannot be certainly known by the Zeal of Men to promote it, or by the ſeeming Wonders which are wrought to confirm the Truth of it: but if the Cauſe which Men are zealous for, be apparently good, and the Doctrine for the Confirmation whereof Miracles are wrought, be ſuch as plainly tends to purify Men's Hearts, and to reform their Lives; and if it be evident that all who embrace it are render'd better Men by it; there can then be no reaſonable Suſpicion of any worldly Deſign in the Promoters of ſuch a Religion, or of any diabolical Illuſion in the working of ſuch Miracles: but as the Miracles do bear Witneſs to the Truth of the Doctrine, ſo the Purity of the Religion does no leſs bear Witneſs to the Truth of the Miracles; and both together are ſuch an

Atteſtation to the Truth and Divinity of the Religion, as cannot reaſonably be excepted againſt.

And by the ſame Means by which this Kingdom of God in his Church was at firſt ſet up, by the ſame (ſo far as they are in our Power,) muſt it be upheld and maintain'd; I ſay, ſo far as they are in our Power; and therefore it having ſeemed good to the divine Wiſdom, after that the *Chriſtian* Religion had been once well proved by Miracles, and the Hiſtory thereof had been once publiſhed, and generally receiv'd in the World, to withdraw the extraordinary Power of Miracles, as being no longer needful; the only Means whereby we can now contribute towards the upholding and eſtabliſhing this Kingdom of God in the World, is by Zeal in maintaining the Truth of our Religion, againſt vain Diſputers; and eſpecially by a remarkable Strictneſs and Sanctity of Life. And this moſt certainly will be an effectual Means to make our Religion be ſpread and propagated in the World, if by the Holineſs and Exemplarineſs of our Lives, we can make it

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that the Religion which we profeſs is more excellent than any other. Thus, as we pray that the Kingdom of God may come, *i. e.* that his true Worſhip and Religion may be propagated in the World, and that all Nations of the Earth may come into the Boſom of the Church, we are to endeavour the ſame by *ſhining as Lights in the World*; and by proving to all, the Excellency of our holy Religion, by the Purity and Excellency of our own Lives, led exactly according to the ſtrict and perfect Precepts thereof. But,

2. As we pray that God's Kingdom may come, *viz.* that Kingdom of God which is within us; *i. e.* that God may rule in the Hearts of all thoſe who do confeſs him with their Mouths; it is our Duty, and what in Compliance and Conformity to our own Petition we ought to do, to give him our own Hearts, to yield our ſelves, without any Reſerve, to believe whatever he has revealed, and to do whatſoever he has enjoined.

For the chief Enemies to this Kingdom of God within us, and which hinder it from being eſtabliſhed; I ſay, the chief Enemies to this Kingdom of God are likewiſe within us; they are the naughty Deſires and Inclinations of our own Hearts; the *natural Man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God,* ——— *becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned*; the *carnal Mind*, is *Enmity againſt God, for it is not ſubject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.* Theſe Enemies, therefore, of God's Kingdom, it is our part to fight againſt, thereby to promote, as much as in us lies, the Accompliſhment of our own Petition. And 'tis not enough for us, in this Caſe, to pray that God's Kingdom may come, to implore his Grace to ſanctify us, and redeem us from our Sins and Corruptions; but we muſt work together with it, and ſet our ſelves as ſtrenuouſly to mortify all our carnal Affections, and corrupt Inclinations, as if we had no Help but from our ſelves: and then thus praying, and thus endeavouring, thus procuring by our Prayer God's Grace to work

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in us, and thus working our ſelves together with the divine Grace, both our Endeavours will be ſucceſsful, and our Prayers alſo availing, and the Kingdom of God will come; it will be ſet up and eſtabliſhed within our Hearts: for, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, 2 *Cor.* x. 4, 5. *The Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal, but mighty thro' God, to the pulling down of Strong-holds, caſting down Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth it ſelf againſt the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Chriſt.*

3. Laſtly; when we ſay *thy Kingdom come*, we mean thereby not only God's Kingdom of Grace, but likewiſe his Kingdom of Glory; we pray not only that the Bounds of his Church may be enlarged, that he may have the *Heathen for his Inheritance*, and the *utmoſt Parts of the Earth for his Poſſeſſion*, and that he may reign and rule in the Hearts of all thoſe who profeſs Subjection to him; but we pray likewiſe, (as 'tis expreſs'd in one of

the Collects of our Church, appointed to be uſed at the Burial of the Dead; we pray, I ſay,) that having *accompliſhed the Number of his Elect, he would alſo haſten his Kingdom; that* ſo *we, with all thoſe that are departed in the true Faith of his holy Name, may have our perfect Conſummation and Bliſs, both in Body and Soul, in his eternal and everlaſting Glory.*

And when we pray that God's Kingdom of Glory may come, the Duty which the Petition, taken in this Senſe, inſtructs us in, and enforces upon our Practice, is to be diligent in preparing our ſelves for this Kingdom of God; that ſo, when our Lord comes to take upon him this Kingdom, we may be provided to receive him, and in a fit Condition to enter with him into it. *Seeing that ye look for ſuch things,* (ſaith St. *Peter*, 2 *Pet.* iii. 14. when he had been ſpeaking of the coming of this *great Day* of God, *wherein the Heavens ſhall paſs away with a great Noiſe, and the Elements ſhall melt with fervent Heat; the Earth alſo, and the Works that*

that are therein, ſhall be burnt up, and *we, according to his Promiſe, look for a new Heaven and a new Earth, wherein dwelleth Righteouſneſs, ſeeing,* ſays he, *that ye look for ſuch things*; and I think it may be ſaid much rather, *ſeeing that ye pray for ſuch things,* and are endeavouring by your own Petitions to haſten the coming of this great Day of God;) *be diligent, that when he comes, ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and blameleſs.* They who live here without any Senſe of Religion, may plead, when that Day ſhall come upon them, that they were ſurprized by a Judgment which they looked not for; but we who pray, every Day, that God's Kingdom may come, ſhall not be able ſo much as to pretend that we were not aware of its coming; and ſo ſhall be of all others the moſt inexcuſable, if we are not prepared for it.

Let then our *Loins be always girded about*, and our *Lights always burning*, and we *our ſelves like unto Men that wait for their Lord, that when he cometh and knocketh,* we *may open unto him immediately,*

ately, Luke xiii. 35, *&c.* This is the good Leſſon we are reminded of, every time we repeat this Petition; and *bleſſed are thoſe Servants, whom the Lord, when he cometh, ſhall find watching*, *v.* 37.

If we are always in this Poſture, we may ſay this part of our Lord's Prayer with true Devotion, and with an earneſt Longing and Deſire of the Accompliſhment of our own Wiſhes; and then, when we ſee this Day a coming, we may *lift up* our *Heads with Joy, knowing that* our *Redemption draweth nigh*, Luke xxi. 28. But to them who live in Wickedneſs and Uncleanneſs, or in Riot and Exceſs, beating their Fellow-Servants, and eating and drinking with the Drunken; the Day of the Lord, without their wiſhing, will come too ſoon; *the Lord* of ſuch Servants *will come in a Day when* they *look not for him, and in an Hour that* they *are not aware of, and will cut* them *aſunder, and appoint* them their *Portion with Hypocrites; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of Teeth*, Matth. xxiv. 50. And to ſuch as theſe, who live without a true and

and ſerious Senſe of God and Religion, and yet, for Form and Cuſtom-ſake, pray with the Church, and ſay every Day, *thy Kingdom come*, the Prophet *Amos* gives a very juſt and ſeaſonable Reproof; *Amos* v. 18, *&c. Wo unto you that deſire the Day of the Lord; to what End is it for you? The Day of the Lord is Darkneſs, and not Light; as if a Man did flee from a Lyon, and a Bear met him; or went into the Houſe, and leaned his Hand on the Wall, and a Serpent bit him. Shall not the Day of the Lord be Darkneſs, and not Light? Even very dark, and no Brightneſs in it?* I conclude all therefore with theſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, Rom. xiii. 12, *&c. The Night is far ſpent, the Day is at Hand*, (that great Day of the Lord, when we muſt give an Account of all our Works, it is at hand, it is very near approaching;) *let us therefore caſt off the Works of Darkneſs, and let us put on the Armour of Light. Let us walk honeſtly, as in the Day, not in Rioting and Drunkenneſs, not in Chambering*

bering and Wantonneſs, not in Strife and Envying; but put ye on the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and make not Proviſion for the Fleſh, to fulfil the Luſts thereof.

THY

THY
WILL be done, &c.
EXPLAINED.

DISCOURSE LII.

Thy Will be done, &c. *explained.*

MATTH. VI. 10.

——*Thy Will be done, in Earth as it is in Heaven.*

THE Prayer taught here by our *Saviour* to his Diſciples, conſiſts (as I have formerly noted) of three principal Parts; I. A Preface, containing a ſolemn Invocation of Almighty God, *Our Father which art in Heaven:* II. The Body of the Prayer, conſiſting of ſix diſtinct Petitions: and III. The Concluſion of it; containing, 1. A Doxology, or ſolemn Recognition of

of the Greatneſs and Majeſty of God, *thine is the Kingdom, the Power and the Glory, for ever and ever*; and, 2. A Profeſſion of our hearty Aſſent to every Clauſe of the foregoing Prayer, and of our Faith and Truſt in God, in the Word, *Amen*.

And the firſt part of this Prayer, *viz.* the Preface, containing (as I ſaid,) a ſolemn Invocation of Almighty God, whom we are taught to call, *Our Father which is in Heaven*, I have formerly diſcourſed of; ſhewing the Meaning thereof, and what Duties it inſtructs us in, and obliges us to.

I have likewiſe already entred upon the ſecond Part, *viz.* the Body of the Prayer, conſiſting (as I told you,) of ſix ſeveral Petitions, three of them chiefly regarding God's Glory, and the other three of them chiefly reſpecting our own Good.

And the two firſt of theſe, *hallowed be thy Name*, and *thy Kingdom come*, I have likewiſe already diſcourſed of. In ſpeaking of both which, I have ſhewed you, firſt, what we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God;

God; and ſecondly, what Duties we may learn, and are inſtructed in, by our Uſe of theſe Petitions.

I proceed now to diſcourſe of the third Petition, in the ſame Method; *thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

I. Then, I am to declare the Meaning of theſe Words, or to ſhew what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we repeat this Clauſe or Petition of the Lord's Prayer; *thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

Now the *Will* of God is two-fold; the *Will* of his *Counſel* or *Providence*, and the *Will* of his *Precepts* or *Commands*; both which we pray, in this Petition, may be done.

1. By that *Will* of God, which we pray may be done, we may underſtand the *Will* of his *Counſel* or *Providence*; *i. e.* that *Will* of God, by which he orders and diſpoſes every thing in the World, as it pleaſes him, *working all things according to the Counſel of his own Will*, Eph. i. 11.

And thus, whatever falls out in the World is the Will of God, and there is no Event which comes to paſs, no Accident which happens, but what is agreeable to God's Will, and is brought to paſs by the Ordering and Diſpoſition, by the Operation or Permiſſion of his Providence; for *he doth according to his Will in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his Hand, or ſay unto him, what doeſt thou?* as 'tis ſaid, *Dan.* iv. 30. And *whatſoever the Lord pleaſed, that did he in Heaven, and in Earth, and in the Seas, and in all deep Places*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxxxv. 6.

But now, if it be ſo, that God does always order every thing according to his own Pleaſure; if, as the *wiſe Man* ſays, *Prov.* xix. 21. *Whatever Devices there are in the Heart of Man, the Counſel of the Lord, that ſhall ſtand.* If, whatever Oppoſition be made to him, he will yet bring to paſs whatever he purpoſes, what need we then make this the Subject of our Petition? We need not ſurely pray for that, which will certainly be whether we

pray

pray for it or no; if therefore what God wills be always done, what need we pray that *his Will may be done? For who hath reſiſted his Will*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks? *Rom.* ix. 19. And, *the Lord of Hoſts hath purpoſed*, ſaith the Prophet, *and who ſhall diſannul it? And his Hand is ſtretched out, and who ſhall turn it back?* Iſaiah xiv. 27.

I anſwer; if we underſtand this by *the Will of God*, in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *viz.* the Execution of his Purpoſe and Counſel, then when we pray, that his Will may be done, we do not mean that it may be done by himſelf, but that it may be done us; *i. e.* we do not pray that God may do what *he* pleaſes, but that what pleaſes God, and what he does according to his own Pleaſure, may pleaſe us too. When we pray that God's Will may be done, (meaning thereby the Will of his Counſel, or Providence;) our Wiſh and Deſire is, that we our ſelves, and all Men may perfectly acquieſce in, and be fully ſatisfyed with whatſoever God ſhall pleaſe to order for us; for then we do this

Will of God, when we patiently ſuffer it, and in all the Accidents which befall us, whether they be pleaſing or ungrateful, proſperous or adverſe, can heartily join in that Saying of good old *Eli*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. *It is the Lord; let him do what ſeemeth him good.*

Or elſe, taking *the Will of God* ſtill in this Senſe, for the *Will* of his *Counſel* or *Providence*; I think this Clauſe in the Lord's Prayer, *thy Will be done*, may be yet better underſtood, as an *Act* of *Submiſſion* and *Reſignation* to the Will of God, rather, I ſay, than as a Wiſh or Petition. Thus the Phraſe is uſed in *Acts* xxi. 14. where, after the *Chriſtians* who were with St. *Paul* had in vain endeavour'd to perſuade him not to go up to *Jeruſalem*, becauſe that *there* (as it had been foretold by *Agabus,*) *Bonds and Afflictions did abide him*, it is ſaid by St. *Luke*, and *when he would not be perſuaded, we ceaſed, ſaying, the Will of the Lord be done*; *i. e.* "If it muſt be ſo, if it be the Will of "God that thou ſhould'ſt go up to *Jeru-* "*ſalem*, and ſuffer there thoſe things which

" have been foretold, *ſo be it, we are*
" *contented, we ſubmit to this Will of*
" *God, we acquieſce in his good Plea-*
" *ſure, we are ſatisfyed that it ſhould*
" *be as it pleaſes him.*" And in the ſame Senſe our *Saviour* himſelf uſed this very ſame Phraſe, in Prayer to God, when he was in his Agony in the Garden, the Evening before his Crucifixion, *Matth.* xxvi. 42. *He prayed, ſaying, O my Father, if this Cup may not paſs away from me, except I drink it, thy Will be done*; *i. e.* I ſubmit; I am content to do it; I reſign my ſelf wholly to thy Pleaſure, to ſuffer whatever thou ſhalt think fit to lay upon me. For that this was our *Saviour*'s Meaning in thoſe Words, *thy Will be done*, appears plainly from the 39th ℣. of that Chapter, where the ſame Prayer of our Lord is thus related; *O my Father, if it be poſſible, let this Cup paſs from me*; *nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt*; where theſe laſt Words, *nevertheleſs not as I will, but as thou wilt*, are manifeſtly an *Act*, or an *Expreſſion* of his *Reſignation* of himſelf to God's Will and Pleaſure, and is thus

expreſſed by St. *Luke*, *Nevertheleſs not my Will, but thine be done*, Luke xxii. 42.

When therefore we ſay the ſame Words in the Lord's Prayer, *thy Will be done*, it is very proper for us at all times, but then eſpecially when we are under any Affliction, or have a Proſpect of ſome ſore Evil like to befall us, to uſe them in the ſame Senſe in which our Lord then did; *i. e.* to compoſe our ſelves thereby to a patient Suffering of the Will of God, to mean them as an Act of Reſignation of our ſelves to his good Pleaſure. But,

2. There is another Branch of God's Will, which I called before the Will of his Precepts or Commands; that is, that Will of his which he has declared to us, which he has given us as a Rule to walk by; for what God has enjoin'd us, that is his *Will* we ſhould do. Thus our *Saviour* ſays of himſelf, *Joh.* vi. 38. *Him that cometh to me I will in no wiſe caſt out; for I came down from Heaven, not to do my own Will, but the Will of him that ſent me; and this is the Father's*

Will

Will which hath ſent me, that of all which he hath given me, I ſhould loſe nothing. And *this* (we are told by the *Apoſtle,*) *is the Will of God, even our Sanctification*, 1 Theſſ. iv. 3. And 'tis *this Will of God* which I take to be chiefly meant in this Petition, and which we pray may be done.

And underſtanding the *Will* of God, in this Senſe, there are two things which we pray for in this Petition, both in the Behalf our ſelves, and in the Behalf of others.

(1.) We pray that God would be pleaſed *to make known his Will* to us and to all Men, that we may not be *unwiſe, but underſtanding what the Will of the Lord is*, as the *Apoſtle* ſpeaks, *Eph.* v. 17. That we may *prove what is that good and acceptable, and perfect Will of God*, as 'tis ſaid, *Rom.* xii. 2. Becauſe unleſs we know what the Will of God is, and what things he would have us do, we ſhall not know how to ſet our ſelves to the Performance thereof.

(2.) We pray alſo, that having made known his Laws to us, he would be pleaſed to give us his Grace obediently to keep the ſame; for then this Will of God is done by us, when we do what he commands us; when we obey all his Precepts, and when we order all our Converſation aright, and according to the Rules and Directions which he has preſcribed. And therefore, that we our ſelves, and all other Men, may always do thus, is what we are to be underſtood to mean, when we pray that *his Will may be done in Earth.*

But it follows in the Prayer, *as it is in Heaven*; *thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven*; *i. e.* May thy Will be done and performed by us Men, who live now here upon the Earth, as it is by thy holy Angels which are in Heaven; of whom the holy *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* ciii. 20, 21. that *they do his Commands, hearkning unto the Voice of his Word,* and that *they are the Miniſters of God, that do his Pleaſure.*

But

But there are ſome ſpecial Conditions, or Qualifications, of the Obedience of the holy Angels to the Will of God, which help to render it more grateful to him, and better accepted by him, than otherwiſe it would be: theſe therefore we pray, in this Petition, may be imitated by Men on Earth, in their doing the Will of God, when we pray that his Will may be done in Earth, *as it is in Heaven.*

And this I take to be the Meaning of the Word *as*; *as it is in Heaven.* This *as* denotes a *Likeneſs* only, not an *Equality*; for we can't be ſuppos'd to pray that the Will of God may be done as perfectly by Men as it is by Angels; that the Obedience of Men, in this mortal and ſinful State, ſhould be as ſpotleſs and untainted as that of the holy Spirits in Heaven is: for ſuch Obedience as they yield to the Will of God, is ſo much beyond what we are able to yield, while we are here in the Body; that we can hardly pray with Faith, that ours may be exactly ſuch, that it may be in no Reſpect inferior to theirs: but ours may be as good as it can be in this

faril

frail and degenerate State; our Obedience may be *like* theirs, tho' not *equal* to it; ours may be, tho' not *ſo perfect*, yet *ſo qualified* and *conditioned* as theirs is; and that ſuch, it may be, we deſire of God in this Petition. Particularly,

1*ſt*. As in Heaven there are *no rebellious Spirits* mixt with the holy Angels, (for *the Angels which kept not their firſt Eſtate, have alſo left their own Habitation, and are reſerved in everlaſting Chains, under Darkneſs, unto the Judgment of the great Day*, as St. *Jude* tells us, in the 6th ℣. of his Epiſtle; ſo that there are now none in Heaven, who gainſay or oppoſe the divine Pleaſure;) ſo we pray that it may be on Earth; *i. e.* that the *whole Race of Men* may be a willing and obedient People; that all Vice and Wickedneſs may be aboliſhed, and rooted out of the Earth; that thoſe Days may come which have been foretold long ago by the Prophets, when *they ſhall not teach every Man his Neighbour, and every Man his Brother, ſaying, know the Lord, for all*

ſhall

ſhall know me, from the leaſt unto the greateſt, Jer. xxxi. 34. *For the Earth ſhall be full of the Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the Sea*, Iſaiah xi. 9.

2*dly*. Whatever the holy Angels do, in Obedience to the Commands of God, they do it *with a good Will*; they not only do what they are commanded, but they are pleaſed with the Command; they obey cheerfully, and from the Heart, without any Reluctancy, without any Spice of Unwillingneſs, or the leaſt Degree of Averſion to the Buſineſs they are employ'd about: they not only do the Will of God, but they delight to do it; they undertake their Work, not as a Task, but as a Pleaſure: and therefore that we, and all the Inhabitants of the Earth may do ſo too, is another thing which we deſire of God in this Petition.

3*dly*. As a Fruit of this Heartineſs in their Obedience, whatever they are commanded they *undertake* readily; they need not be often urged, or frequently called upon

upon to do this Work; but the leaſt Intimation of God's Pleaſure preſently ſets them to it. That we therefore may do ſo too, that we may obey readily, and without Delay take in Hand the Work which God has given us to do, is another thing which we beg of God in this Petition.

4*thly*. As they readily undertake, ſo they likewiſe *ſpeedily execute* whatever they are commanded; they are the winged Meſſengers of God, and when they are ſent they run; when they are bid to go, they fly; they ſet about their Work ſo quickly, and diſpatch it ſo nimbly, that the Space of Time between God's giving his Command, and their executing it, is hardly perceptible. Thus when *Cornelius* prayed, and an Angel was ſent unto him by God, to tell him that his Prayers were heard, and his Alms accepted, and to order him to ſend for St. *Peter* to be inſtructed by him in the Chriſtian Religion; all this was done, the Meſſage was both ſent from God, and delivered to him by the

Angel

Angel, before he had ended his Prayer; as you may ſee, *Acts* x. 30. That we therefore may ſo *run the Way of God's Commandments*, and with the like Speed and Diligence finiſh the Work which is given us to do, is what we farther deſire of God in this Petition, when we ſay, *thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*

5thly, And laſtly; as the Obedience of the holy Angels is hearty and chearful, prompt and ſpeedy, ſo it is likewiſe univerſal. They never decline any Work which they are ſet to; whatever it is that they are forbidden to do, it is all alike to them; they make no Difference, but as readily undertake one thing as another; they have no Will of their own, diſtinct from, and much leſs oppoſite to, the Will of God; but what God wills, they will too; and immediately ſet themſelves to execute his Commands.

Thus is God's Will done in Heaven by the holy Angels, and thus we pray that it may be done in Earth by our ſelves, and by all Men, when we uſe this Paſſage of the

the Lord's Prayer. So that the full Senſe of this Petition, (underſtanding by the Will of God, both *the Will of his Providence*, and *the Will of his Precepts*;) and the Meaning which we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words, is this; "*Righteous art thou, O Lord,* "*and upright are all thy Judgments, and* "*the Teſtimonies that thou haſt command-*"*ed are alſo righteous, and very faithful*; "may we, therefore, and all Men, always "meekly ſubmit our ſelves to thy Diſpoſal; "may we always be well content and ſa-"tisfyed with that Lot and Portion which "thou aſſigneſt to us; and whatever Com-"mands thou art at any time pleaſed to "lay upon us, may they univerſally be "ſubmitted to, by all; and grant that we "may perform them, with ſuch Hearti-"neſs and good Will, with ſuch Readineſs "and Cheerfulneſs, with ſuch Speed and "Impartiality, as the holy Angels in Hea-"ven do."

And now, having explain'd the Meaning of this Petition, I proceed, as I propos'd in the ſecond Place,

II. To

II. To ſhew what good Leſſons we are taught, what Duties we are inſtructed in, and engag'd to, by our Uſe of this Petition, *thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* And,

1. Taking the Will of God, in the firſt Senſe, for the Will of his Counſel or Providence; the Duty we are inſtructed in, and reminded of by our Uſe of this Petition, is to ſubmit our ſelves entirely to God's Will; to be contented with our Lot; to like well that Place and Station which the Providence of God aſſigns us; and to be eaſy and patient under all the Calamities and Afflictions which befall us in this Life; whatſoever pleaſes God, ſhould pleaſe us too; and we ſhould always reſt ſatisfyed, that what he orders for us is beſt. And we contradict our ſelves, and act inconſiſtently with our own Petition, if, while we pray that God's Will may be done, we fret and murmur at any of the Diſpenſations of his Providence towards us, or cavil at, and find Fault with, his ordering

ordering and Adminiſtration of things; for he *worketh all things according to the Counſel of his own Will*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays; and what is according to God's Will, is likewiſe according to our own Deſire; for we pray that *his Will may be done*; what Reaſon then can we have to complain, when things fall out according to our own Wiſhes? And unleſs the Event of things, which is always according to the Will of God, be likewiſe pleaſing to us, we are guilty of foul Diſſimulation and Hypocriſy with God, when we pray that *his Will may be done.*

And there is Reaſon good, that we ſhou'd be of this quiet, compoſed, and contented Spirit; there is ſufficient Reaſon implied even in the Petition it ſelf, to oblige us to be always thus eaſy and ſatisfyed with the divine Adminiſtrations; for the Will which we deſire may be done, or which we declare our Acquieſcence in, is *God's*; *thy Will be done.*

And he is a Being of infinite Wiſdom; he knows before-hand what will be the Iſſue and Event of all his Adminiſtrations; and

and he underſtands exactly what is beſt for the World, and for every particular Man in it; and is able ſo to contrive and order things, that what ſeems evil and adverſe, ſhall work for good at the laſt: whereas on the contrary, we underſtand very little of the Nature and Tendency of things, or indeed even of our own Tempers and Conſtitutions. We neither know what is beſt in it ſelf, nor what is beſt for us; we oftentimes wiſh for our ſelves thoſe things, which if we had them would be our Ruin; and are ſometimes ſenſible afterwards of the Kindneſs, as well as of the Wiſdom of God, in denying us thoſe things which we (perhaps with too much Urgency and Importunity;) did requeſt of him. And *we* as little know what is bad for us; we are apt to fret and complain when ever any thing croſs or adverſe happens to us, and yet afterwards we often ſee Reaſon to ſay with the *Pſalmiſt*, *It is good for us that we have been in Trouble.* Seeing therefore that God knows always both what is beſt, and how beſt to bring

it about, it is very reaſonable for us to ſubmit to his Will; eſpecially,

Seeing he is as *good* and *gracious* as he is wiſe; all his Thoughts towards us are kind, and he deſigns our Good by all the Diſpenſations of his Providence: conſidering which, we may be always well aſſured, that whatever he chuſes and orders for us, tho' it be not to our preſent liking, is more for our Good than any thing we could have choſen for our ſelves. So that we may with good Reaſon live more at Eaſe, freer from Care and Fear, under the Care and Protection of his good Providence, than we could do, if we might have our own Wiſhes and Deſires in every thing; and we do indeed wiſh the beſt which we can for our ſelves, when we ſay, *not our Will, but thine be done.* But,

2. Taking the Will of God in the other Senſe, for the Will of his Precepts or Commands, there are likewiſe ſeveral things which we may learn and be inſtructed in, by

by our Uſe of this Petition; *thy Will be done.* For,

(1.) Being here taught by our *Saviour* to make it a Matter of Prayer to God, that his Will may be done; that is, that he would pleaſe to give us his Grace to do thoſe things which he requires of us. We may hence be admoniſhed, that we can't of our ſelves do the Will of God as we ought to do, nor perform acceptable Obedience to him, without the divine Grace and Aſſiſtance: [a] for we need not be beholden to another for that which is in our own Power; we need not ask that of another, which we our ſelves can do without his Help. Being therefore here taught to pray every Day for the divine Grace, to enable us to do the Will of God, we are hereby reminded of our own Weakneſs and Impotence; that we can neither begin a good Work without the Motion of the

[a] Quid ſtultius quàm orare ut facias, quod in poteſtate habeas? *Aug. de Nat. & Gratiâ. Cap.* 18. *in Brug. in loc.*

holy Spirit, nor make any Progreſs in Holineſs and Virtue, without freſh Supplies of the divine Grace, according to that of the Apoſtle, *Phil.* ii. 13. *It is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of his good Pleaſure.* Our Belief of this Truth, that we can do nothing well of our ſelves, without the Help of God, is plainly the Ground of this Petition; and this we do tacitly, and by Implication, acknowledge to God every time we repeat it. When we pray to God to give us his Grace, to do his Will, we own and confeſs that we *are not ſufficient of our ſelves to do any thing as of our ſelves, but that our Sufficiency is of God*, as the *Apoſtle* ſays, 2 *Cor.* iii. 5.

And the Conſideration of the Neceſſity of the divine Grace, to enable us to do the Will of God, ought in Reaſon to make us diligent and conſtant in imploring it; according to that Direction which is given us by our *Saviour*, *Luke* xi. 9, &c. *Ask, and it ſhall be given you; ſeek, and ye ſhall find; knock, and it ſhall be opened unto you:——for if ye, being evil, know how*

how to give good Gifts unto your Children, how much more ſhall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him?

(2.) Being here taught by our *Saviour*, to implore the Aſſiſtance of the divine Grace, to enable us to do the Will of God, we may hence conclude that God requires nothing more of us, in order to render our ſelves accepted to him, than we are able, by the Aſſiſtance of the divine Grace, to perform. For certainly our *Saviour* would not teach us to pray for a thing which can't be; nay, he himſelf has told us that one of the Conditions of a prevailing Prayer to God, is to believe that our Requeſt will be granted; *Mar.* xi. 24. *Whatſoever things ye deſire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye ſhall have them:* but if the Matter of our Requeſt be impoſſible, we can't believe that it will be granted. Being therefore here taught by our *Saviour*, to pray that God's Will may be performed by us, it is certainly poſſible that it may be performed, tho'

not perfectly, tho' not without much Mixture of humane Frailty and Imperfection; yet at leaſt with Sincerity, and in ſuch manner, as God, conſidering our Infirmity, will for *Chriſt's* Sake graciouſly accept.

And the Conſideration of this, that God requires nothing of us, but what by the Aſſiſtance of his Grace he will enable us to perform, is a good Encouragement to us to ſet about our Work with Cheerfulneſs and Vigour, and to keep us from ever being daunted or diſcouraged, by any Difficulty or Oppoſition which we may meet with in the doing of it; conſidering how mightily we are aſſiſted by the divine Grace, we may ſay with the *Apoſtle*, that we *can do all things thro' Chriſt that ſtrengthneth* us; and ſetting to our Work with Courage, and good hope of Succeſs, we ſhall find the Difficulty thereof much leſs than we feared.

(3.) As we pray, ſo we ought likewiſe to practiſe. If therefore we do earneſtly deſire that the Will of God may be done, we ſhall alſo earneſtly endeavour the Accompliſhment

pliſhment of our own Petition; and in order to this, we ſhall uſe all Diligence to acquaint our ſelves with the Will of God; by conſtant reading in the holy Scripture, in which the whole Will of God is plainly revealed, and which is *able to make us wiſe unto Salvation.* Being deſirous to walk in the way of God's Commandments, we ſhall be careful to guide our ſelves by the Direction of his holy *Word*, which, as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *is a Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Path,* Pſal. cxix. 105.

And then when we know what the Will of our Lord is, it is our Duty, (a Duty indeed comprehending all other Duties;) which we are not only reminded of, but ſtrictly obliged to by our Uſe of this Petition, to ſet our ſelves with all Diligence, to the doing of all thoſe things which are required of us. For we contradict our own Petition, and are inconſiſtent with our ſelves, if ever we oppoſe in our own Practice, that good and perfect Will of God, which we pray may be done.

(4.) And laſtly; by our Uſe of this Clauſe of the Lord's Prayer, we are not only taught the Neceſſity of Obedience to the Will and Command of God, but we are likewiſe inſtructed in the Nature and neceſſary Qualifications of an acceptable Obedience; for we pray not only that God's Will may be done in Earth by us Men, but that it may be *ſo* done by us on Earth, *as it is in Heaven*; *i. e.* as it is done by the holy Angels; and how that is, I have already ſhewed.

As therefore we deſire in this Petition, that the Will of God may be done by *all* the Inhabitans of the Earth, as it is by *all* the holy Angels in Heaven; we ought to endeavour this, as much as lies in our Power, by teaching, inſtructing, and admoniſhing one another; we ought, according to the Apoſtle's Precept, to *conſider one another, to provoke unto Love, and to good Works*, Heb. x. 24. But eſpecially, our Zeal to reform the World, ſhould be chiefly exerciſed in our own Families, which we ſhould take Care to have well inſtructed

inſtructed in their Duties, and by prudent Diſcipline held to the Exerciſe and Practice thereof; according to the good Example given us by *Abraham*, the *Father of the Faithful*, concerning whom we have this Teſtimony given by God himſelf, *Gen.* xviii. 19. *I know him, that he will command his Children, and his Houſhold after him, and they ſhall keep the Way of the Lord, to do Juſtice and Judgment.*

Again; as we pray that we our ſelves, and all Men upon Earth, may obey the Will of God with *Willingneſs* and *Cheerfulneſs*, as the Angels in Heaven do; we ought, in Compliance with our own Petition, to be cheerful in our own Obedience, to delight our ſelves in the Law of God; to love the thing which he commands, and to do the Will of God from the Heart; according to the Example given us by our bleſſed *Saviour*, in *Joh.* iv. 34. *My Meat is to do the Will of him that ſent me, and to finiſh his Work.* And thus likewiſe did the *Pſalmiſt*; ſeveral Teſtimonies of which we have in *Pſal.* cxix. *I have rejoiced in the way of thy Teſtimonies,*

nies, as much as in all Riches, ℣. 14. *I love thy Commands above Gold, yea, above fine Gold,* ℣. 127. *The Law of thy Mouth is better unto me, than thouſands of Gold and Silver,* ℣. 72. *I rejoice at thy Word, as one that findeth great Spoil,* ℣. 162. *My Soul hath kept thy Teſtimonies, and I love them exceedingly.* ℣. 167.

Again; the holy Angels in Heaven, as they obey *heartily*, ſo they undertake *readily*, the Work they are ſet to; and thus we pray in this Petition, that we may do likewiſe; and as we pray, ſo we ought to practiſe. It is our Duty therefore which we are reminded of, and engag'd to, by our Uſe of this Petition, to undertake *readily* the Work and Buſineſs God has given us to do, to take the firſt Intimation of his Pleaſure, and to comply with his Will upon the firſt Knowledge which we have of it; according to the Example of the ſame holy *Pſalmiſt*, Pſal. cxix. 59, 60. *I thought on my Ways, and turned my Feet unto thy Teſtimonies; I made haſte, and delayed not to keep thy Commandments.*

Again;

Again; what the holy Angels undertake, at the Command of God, they *ſpeedily* execute; they do their Work diligently, they loſe no Time from it, 'till it be accompliſhed. And in this likewiſe we pray, in this Petition, that our Obedience may be like theirs. In order to which therefore it is our Duty, according to the Directions given us in Scripture, *not to be ſlothful in Buſineſs, but fervent in Spirit, ſerving the Lord*, Rom. xii. 11. And *whatſoever our Hand findeth to do, to do it with all our Might*, Eccleſ. ix. 10.

Laſtly; the holy Angels (as I obſerved before) make no Difference in the Commands of God; they do not prefer one before another; they never decline any Work which they are ſet to: and ſuch likewiſe our Obedience to the Commands of God ought to be; ſuch we pray it may be, when we ſay, *thy Will be done in Earth, as it is in Heaven.* In Complyance therefore with our own Prayer, our Obedience ought to be *conſtant*, and *uniform*, and *impartial*; and unleſs it be ſo, according to the utmoſt of our Power, it will be neither

ther accepted by God, nor profitable to our ſelves; for *then*, ſays the *Pſalmiſt*, *i. e.* then only, *ſhall I not be aſhamed, when I have reſpect unto all thy Commandments*; *Pſal.* cxix. 6. And we are told by St. *James*, Ch 2. ℣. 10. that *whoſoever ſhall keep the whole Law, and yet offend in one Point, he is guilty of all.*

Thus the Will of God is done in Heaven, by the Angels, and thus we pray it may be done on Earth by us Men; in this manner therefore we ought to endeavour our ſelves to do it.

And indeed, after all which we can do, we ſhall be but unprofitable Servants; when we ſhall have done the beſt we can, we ſhall have only *done what was our Duty to do*; ſo that the only thing which can ſet any Value even upon our beſt Services, is when we thus do the Will of God from the Heart: when out of a true Love to God, we likewiſe have a Love to his Commandments, and take Delight therein, and perform them with a ready and willing Mind, and a cheerful Heart, as the

Angels

Angels in Heaven do. And this, if we do, while we continue upon Earth, our Reward will be great in Heaven; and living now here, as the Angels do in Heaven, we our ſelves ſhall be made equal to the Angels, when we come thither.

The God of Peace therefore, who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jeſus, *that great Shepherd of the Sheep, thro' the Blood of the everlaſting Covenant, make you perfect in every good Work, to do his Will in all things while on Earth, even as the Angels in Heaven do, working in you that which is well-pleaſing in his Sight, thro'* Jeſus Chriſt *our Lord; to whom,* &c. *be Glory for ever and ever.* Amen.

Give us, this Day, our *DAILY BREAD*, EXPLAINED.

DISCOURSE LIII.

Give us this Day our daily Bread, explained.

MATTH. vi. 11.

Give us this Day our daily Bread.

IN the Lord's Prayer, of which I am now diſcourſing, there are, beſides the Preface and the Concluſion, ſix Petitions; the three firſt reſpecting chiefly God's Glory, the three laſt our own Good. And of the three former I have already ſpoken; I come now to ſpeak of the latter.

And here we very reaſonably begin firſt with begging of God that Good which is the

firſt in Nature, and without which we cannot be capable of enjoying any other Good, *viz.* the Preſervation of our Being: and this we beg of God in the fourth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, of which I am now to diſcourſe; *give us this Day our daily Bread.* Which Petition (according to the Method formerly propoſed,) I ſhall firſt explain, ſhewing what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God: and II. I ſhall ſhew what good Leſſons we may learn from our Uſe of this Petition; what Duties it inſtructs us in.

I. I ſhall explain the Petition, and ſhew what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God; *give us this Day our daily Bread.*

And for the Explication of it; I ſhall, 1. Shew what is meant by *Bread:* 2. What is meant by *daily Bread:* and, 3. Why we are taught to ask only for the Bread of the preſent Day; give us, *this Day*, our daily Bread.

1. What

1. What is meant by *Bread.*

Now Bread is the Staff of Life, as'tis called in Scripture, *Lev.* xxvi. 26. 'Tis the main Prop and Support of our frail and mortal Bodies, *Pſal.* cv. 16. 'Tis what we can't well live without, and with which alone we may live well enough, *Iſaiah* iii. 1. And therefore Bread is oftentimes in Scripture ſet to ſignify whatſoever is neceſſary for the Support, Convenience, or Comfort of Life. *Ezek.* iv. 16. v. 16. xiv. 13.

And in this large Senſe, without doubt, it ought to be taken here; for this Being the only Petition of the Lord's Prayer which relates to Temporals, it muſt be underſtood as comprehending all the temporal things which we have need of; ſo that in asking for Bread, we ask alſo for Drink and for Cloaths, and for Shelter from the Weather, and for Protection from Dangers, and for every thing elſe which is needful for us. For what we mean in this Petition, is, to beg the Preſervation of this Life, and conſequently by Bread, which is the only thing that we name in particular, we

muſt be underſtood to mean, whatſoever is neceſſary for the Preſervation of Life, every thing which we cannot live without.

And this, I believe, was all which our *Saviour* deſign'd we ſhould mean to pray for in this Petition, that is, only for all worldly Neceſſaries. Not but that when we utter theſe Words, we may alſo very piouſly enlarge our Deſires; and at the ſame time that we beg Neceſſaries for our Bodies, beg Neceſſaries for our Souls too; and particularly for the Word of God, which is the Bread of Life, and as neceſſary for the well-being of our Souls, as Bread is for the Suſtenance of our Bodies, according to that of our *Saviour*, Matth. iv. 4. *Man ſhall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.* We may therefore, I ſay, underſtand this Petition in this large Senſe, as praying to God for all manner of Neceſſaries, for our Souls, as well as for our Bodies; and for the next Life, as well as for this Life.

And ſo we are taught in that brief Explication of the Lord's Prayer which is in the Church Catechiſm where the Scholar being

being asked, [*What deſireſt thou of God in this Prayer?*] is taught, in that part of the Anſwer which relates to this Petition, to ſay, *I pray unto God that he will ſend us all things that be needful, both for our Souls and Bodies.*

But that other more reſtrained Senſe, which I mentioned before of the Word *Bread*, underſtanding thereby only Neceſſaries for the Support of this Life, being the principal, if not the only Senſe, in which I ſuppoſe our *Saviour* meant it in this Petition, is the only Senſe of it which I ſhall at preſent inſiſt upon; eſpecially becauſe the ſpiritual Senſe of this Petition, according to which we are hereby ſuppoſed to beg Neceſſaries for our Souls, may, I think, be better reduced to the two following Petitions, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes*, and, *lead us not into Temptation, but deliver us from Evil*; for thoſe two things which we are taught to beg there, *viz.* Pardon and Grace, do comprehend as fully all things needful for our Souls, as this Petition, taken in its prime and natural Senſe, does all things needful for our Bodies.

2. The ſecond thing which, in order to the Explication of this Petition, I was to ſhew, is, what is meant by *daily Bread*; give us our daily Bread; in the *Greek* 'tis ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον. And concerning the ſtrict and proper Meaning of this Word, ἐπιούσιος, there is a great Diſpute among the Criticks; but I think the moſt eaſy and natural Senſe of the Word, as well as the moſt agreeable to this Place, is that of St. *Chryſoſtom*, who ſays, that is ἐπιούσιος which is neceſſary ἐπὶ τ ὐσίαν; *i.e.* which is neceſſary for our Subſiſtence.

So that what we mean, when in the Lords Prayer we beg of God our *daily Bread*, ἄρτον ἐπιούσιον, is ſo much Proviſion as is neceſſary for the Body, and no more than is neceſſary. We are not here taught to beg of God Riches and Honours, Dainties and Delicacies, but only Bread; and that not to pleaſe our Palates, and delight our Senſes, but only to preſerve our Bodies in Health and Strength; we deſire not a full Barn, or a rich Wardrobe, or a ſumptuous Palace, becauſe without all theſe we may

may live, and we may live well enough too: but all that we beg for, is what we can't live without; or at moſt, only what we can't live well without; *i. e.* only the convenient Supports, Recruits, and Refreſhments of Nature. So that the ſubject Matter of this Petition, the ἄρτος ἐπιούσιος, the *daily Bread* which we here beg for, is the ſame which the Prophet *Agur* prays for in *Prov.* xxx. 8. and calls *Food convenient* for him: *give me*, ſays he, *neither Poverty nor Riches*; *feed me with Food convenient for me.*

3. I proceed now in the third Place, in order to the farther Explication of this Petition, to ſhew what is the Meaning of our ſaying, give us *this Day*; why we are taught to pray for the neceſſary Proviſion only of the preſent Day.

Now the Word σήμερον, *this Day*, give us *this Day*, is a farther Reſtriction or Limitation of our Deſires of temporal good things, which had been very much limited and reſtrained before. For when we were taught to ask only for *Bread*, our

Deſires were limited only to the Neceſſaries of Life; and when we were taught to ask only for *daily Bread*, or *ſufficient Bread*, our Deſires were again reſtrained only to Neceſſaries, only to ſuch things as are requiſite for our Being and Subſiſtence here. And when we are here taught to ask for a Supply of theſe Neceſſaries of Life, only for *the preſent Day*, give us *this Day*; this reſtrains our Deſires ſtill more; for by ſaying, give us *this Day*, we exclude all anxious Care and Thoughtfulneſs, even about Neceſſaries, for the future time: according to thoſe Precepts of our *Saviour* which follow after, at the end of this Chapter; *take no Thought for your Life, what ye ſhall eat, or what ye ſhall drink, nor yet for your Body, what ye ſhall put on*, ℣. 25, &c. And again; *therefore take no Thought, ſaying, what ſhall we eat, or what ſhall we drink, or wherewithal ſhall we be cloathed?* And again; *take no Thought for to Morrow, for the Morrow ſhall take Thought for the things of it ſelf.* Thus we are taught our Duty by expreſs Precept; and this

this Duty we do in part practiſe, when we ſay this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *give us, this Day, our daily Bread.* We deſire not Store of Proviſion before-hand, but only neceſſary Proviſion, when we want it, and as we have Occaſion to uſe it: not a full Granary, but a Meals Meat; not Goods laid up for many Years, but only ſuch as we ſhall have Uſe and Occaſion for this Day, which we are already entred upon. We do not deſire to have an Eſtate ſettled upon us for Life, that ſo after that we may live of our ſelves, upon our own Income, without being farther beholden to any body; but we are contented to live every Day upon the freſh Supplies of Providence: and by putting up this Petition, by ſaying, *give us this day our daily Bread*, we do, in Effect, declare that we ſhall be well pleaſed if we do not want, altho' we ſhould have nothing before-hand.

And there was good Reaſon why we ſhould be taught to put up our Requeſts to God for temporal things, with this Reſtriction and Limitation; *viz.*

(1.) Be-

(1.) Becauſe we are really dependent Creatures, and muſt live upon Providence whether we will or no; for we can never be ſo rich, and ſo well furniſh'd and provided for, as not to ſtand in continual Need of the Bleſſing of Providence, to preſerve our Store, and to make it uſeful to us. So that the rich Man has no leſs Reaſon to put up this Petition than the poor Man; for as rich as he is, he may, even in one Day's Time, by a Blaſt of Providence, become as poor as the pooreſt, be reduc'd ſo low as to want even a Meals-Meat.

Beſides, there is good Reaſon that we ſhould beg but only for the Neceſſaries of the preſent Day, becauſe this is all which we are allowed to be concerned or thoughtful about; *take no Thought for to Morrow*, ſays our *Saviour:* and if we may not be thoughtful about to Morrow, then we ought to be content if we have now ſo much as will ſerve our preſent Needs, and not to be earneſt in our Deſires to have any thing, till we need it.

More-

Moreover; there is great Reaſon in this Petition, give us *this Day* our daily Bread; becauſe the Bread of this Day is all which we can need; nay, indeed, 'tis all which we can uſe at preſent; for if we had never ſo much Proviſion in Store, we could not eat or drink for a Week or a Month hence; and therefore, if we have but every Day as much as we have Occaſion to uſe that Day, it is as well for us as if we had had it a Week or a Month before; for even then we could not have uſed it, we muſt have kept it by us till we had wanted it, and all that time it would have done us no good: ſo that if we have it but when we need it, we have as much of it as we can in Reaſon deſire.

And ſo much may ſerve for the Explication of this Petition; *give us, this Day, our daily Bread.* By what has been ſaid we may ſee what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God; namely this, "We are "ſenſible, O Father, that our whole De- "pendence is upon thee; that we have "nothing, and can have nothing, but "from

" from thy Bounty; and this Bounty and
" Goodneſs of thine we ſtand in need of
" every Day, for the Support of our Life
" it ſelf, on the Continuance whereof de-
" pends our Enjoyment of all thy other
" Mercies. We beſeech thee, therefore,
" that thou would'ſt be pleaſed to pre-
" ſerve that Life which thou haſt given
" us, and in order to that, that thou
" would'ſt continually, as we have Need,
" beſtow upon us all things neceſſary for
" the Support of Life; Food convenient,
" wholſome Lodging, warm Cloathing,
" Health and Strength of Body, and
" whatever elſe thou ſeeſt needful for us,
" when we need it, and according as we
" need it. We deſire that thou would'ſt
" ſo long preſerve us in this Life, as is
" expedient either for thy Glory, or our
" own Good; and ſo order things, that
" while we continue here our Life may be
" comfortable to us." This is the Sum of what we beg of God in this Petition.

I proceed now, according to the Method at firſt laid down, and which has been

been already obſerved, in all the foregoing Petitions,

II. To ſhew, in the ſecond Place, what good Leſſons we may learn from this Petition; what Duties it inſtructs us in. And,

1. Being here taught by our *Saviour* himſelf, to make our daily Bread, *i.e.* ſuch things as are neceſſary for the Support and Comfort of this Life, a Matter of our conſtant and daily Prayer to God; and that too in this very ſhort Prayer, conſiſting but of ſix Petitions in all: One thing which we may obſerve, and learn from hence, is this; that provided we do but *ſeek firſt the Kingdom of God and his Righteouſneſs*, we are allowed by God to ſeek for other things; *i.e.* for the Neceſſaries and Comforts of this Life, with a ſecondary and ſubordinate Care. For what we may pray to God for, that we may certainly deſire; nay, indeed, our Prayers are hypocritical if we do not deſire it; and what we may deſire, that we may

may ſeek and endeavour to obtain: from whence therefore it is plain that thoſe evangelical Precepts, whereby we are commanded to *be careful for nothing*, and to *take no Thought what we ſhall eat, or drink, or put on*, are not to be underſtood abſolutely, but comparatively; not as forbidding all Care for this Life, but only an exceſſive and prepoſterous Care, or an anxious Thoughtfulneſs and Concern about it. And this Moderation in our Care, for the things of this Life, we are taught even in this Petition; wherein (as I obſerv'd before) we beg only Neceſſaries, and thoſe too only for the preſent Time, the Bread of this Day. And that our Care for theſe things ought to be ſubordinate to our Care for better things, is likewiſe clearly enough intimated by that Place which this Petition hath in our Prayer; for we pray not even for the Neceſſaries of Life, till we have firſt prayed for the Advancement of God's Honour, for the Enlargement of his Kingdom, and for the Performance and Accompliſhment of his Will.

2. Another good Leſſon which we are taught by our Uſe of this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *give us this Day our daily Bread*, is this; that God is the Giver of all good things to us, temporal as well as ſpiritual, and of our Life it ſelf, and of the Continuance thereof. For it would be needleſs to beg our Bread of another, if we had it of our own, or could give it to our ſelves; and it would be fruitleſs, and to no Purpoſe, to beg it of God, if it were not his to give.

But alas! we our ſelves cannot ſubſiſt a Moment, much leſs a Day without him; 'tis *in him that we live, move, and have our Being*, Acts xvii. 28. *By him all things conſiſt*, Coloſſ. i. 17. *He upholds all things by the Word of his Power*, Heb. i. 3. 'Tis his good Providence which delivers us from Dangers, ſome perhaps ſeen or foreknown by us, and a great many others which we are delivered from, before we ſo much as diſcerned our ſelves to be in any Danger. 'Tis he who provides Food for our Hunger, and Raiment for our Cloathing

Cloathing; who makes the Graſs and the Corn to grow for our Uſe, who gives to the Earth a fructiferous Nature, who waters it with the Dew and Rain from Heaven, and with the Springs which run among the Hills: 'tis he who refreſhes it with his Sun, who gives fruitful Seaſons, who grants us Power to gather in the Fruits of the Earth, and gives us Ability to uſe them for our own Suſtenance: 'tis he who makes them yield kind and wholſome Nutriment to the Body, and gives us an Appetite to take, a Palate to reliſh, and a Stomach to digeſt them: 'tis he who make the Beaſts of the Field to increaſe and multiply, to ſerve for our Uſe both of Nouriſhment and Cloathing; and who gives us Skill to make Uſe of what they afford, for the Purpoſes it was deſigned. We are poor, ſorry, helpleſs Creatures of our ſelves; we could do none of all theſe things for our ſelves, neither could any thing elſe be uſeful and ſerviceable to us without God.

We ſay indeed oftentimes, in common Diſcourſe, that ſuch a thing comes to paſs

paſs by Accident, or that ſuch a thing is the Work and Effect of Nature; but when we ſay ſo, we ſpeak fooliſhly and ignorantly; for there is in truth no ſuch thing as Chance or Accident; for *not ſo much as a Sparrow falls to the Ground without God*, as our *Saviour* ſays, and even *the very Hairs of our Head are all numbred.* And when the *Lot is caſt into the Lap, the whole diſpoſing thereof is of the Lord.* Neither is there any ſuch thing as Nature working blindfold, and by it ſelf, without the Concurrence of the firſt Spring or Mover. For, as our *Saviour* likewiſe teaches us, 'tis God who *provides Food for the Fowls*, and who *cloaths the Graſs, and Lillies of the Field.* So that what we call Chance is Providence; and what we aſcribe to Nature, is the Work of the God of Nature; who knows exactly what Power and Strength he has given to ſecond Cauſes, and could have given them more or leſs; and could, if he had pleaſed, as eaſily work and produce the ſame Effects, by

the Word of his Mouth, without natural Cauſes, as with them.

In a Word; whatever is the ſecond and immediate Cauſe, 'tis God who is the firſt Cauſe of all; 'tis he who both gave us our Being at firſt, and every Moment continues us in it; and of his free Bounty gives us all things richly to enjoy. And all this we are taught to believe in this Petition of the Lord's Prayer; and all this we do actually acknowledge every time we repeat theſe Words, and ſay, *give us this Day our daily Bread.*

3. What is fit Matter of Petition when we want it, is juſt Ground of Thankſgiving when we have receiv'd it. If therefore God be the Author of our Being, and of the Continuance thereof, and of all the good things which we enjoy in it, to him of Right and in Juſtice belongs the Praiſe and Glory of all; and therefore, as we are here taught by our *Saviour* to look up to God for every thing, for Temporals as well as Spirituals; ſo we are taught by

by the *Apoſtle* to *give Thanks to God* in *every thing*, or for *every thing*, in 1 *Theſſ.* v. 18.

And 'tis indeed a great Inſtance of Baſeneſs and Diſingenuity, to beg of God our daily Bread, and not alſo to thank him when he has given it; to own our Dependence upon him when we want and crave his Bounty, and not to confeſs the ſame when we have been Partakers of his Kindneſs; to diſcern from whence we muſt have a Supply when we ſtand in Need, and not to ſee who was our Benefactor when our Needs are ſupplied, and to render him our Thanks for the ſame.

And yet, as baſe and diſingenuous as this is, 'tis a Fault which moſt Men are notoriouſly guilty of. Of the *ten Lepers*, who came to our *Saviour* to be healed, there was but *one* (tho' they were all healed,) *that returned to give Glory to God*, *Luke* xvii. 18. And I fear the Proportion of thoſe now-a-days, who receive the Benefits of God with a thankful Heart, is not more or greater. When we are in Affliction, and have no Proſpect of Help

from any other Hand, then we commonly betake our ſelves to God, and cry mightily to him for Deliverance; but when we are delivered, we ſoon forget our Benefactor: like the *Iſraelites* in the Wilderneſs, of whom the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* lxxviii. 34, *&c.* that *when he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and enquired early after God; then they remembred that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer*; but when once their Danger was over, *they remembred not his Hand, nor the Day when he delivered them from the Enemy*, *℣.* 42. And ſo it is generally with us; we ſee the Need of his Help when we are in Diſtreſs, but we do not ſee the Kindneſs of it when we are deliver'd: when we want Bread, we go to God for it; but when we are fed to the full, and waxen fat, like *Jeſurun* we *kick againſt him*, being *grown thick*, and *covered with Fatneſs*, we *forſake the God that made us*, *and lightly eſteem the Rock of our Salvation*, Deut. xxxii. 15.

But

But it ſhould not be thus; and our conſtant and daily Uſe of this Petition is an excellent Means to cure us of our Unthankfulneſs; for when we ſay, to Day, *give us this Day our daily Bread*; if we mind what we ſay, and are affected with it, it can't but remind us that we receiv'd our Bread Yeſterday from the ſame Hand from which we do now beg it, and that the Bread of Yeſterday was then as neceſſary, and as ſeaſonable a Supply, as the Bread of this Day will be now; and conſequently that we ought in Reaſon to be as heartily thankful for the Good we have receiv'd, as we are now earneſtly deſirous to receive more.

4. Another good Leſſon which we are inſtructed in, by our Uſe of this Petition, *give us this Day our daily Bread*, is this; that we ought to moderate our Deſires of all worldly good things, and particularly that we ſhould not extend them to a time very long hence to come: by our Uſe of this Petition we are plainly

taught that there is no Reaſon why we ſhould do ſo.

For ſince 'tis the ſame God who gave us our Being, and who preſerves us in it; ſince 'tis the ſame God, of whoſe Bounty we have already receiv'd all things needful, who muſt likewiſe ſupply all our future Needs, we have no Reaſon to diſtruſt his Goodneſs or his Power; but may ſafely *caſt all our Cares for the future upon him, who has* hitherto *cared for us*, and upon whom we have hitherto lived ever ſince we were born. For, as our *Saviour* argues, at the 25th ỳ. of this Chapter, *the Life is more than Meat, and the Body than Raiment*; why then ſhould we fear that he who has given us Life, will not give us wherewithal to ſupport this Life? Or why ſhould we think that he who has given us a Body, either cannot or will not give us Raiment to cloath the Body? For he who has done that which is more, is certainly able to do that which is leſs; and he who has done us a great Kindneſs already, will not certainly deny us a ſmaller.

Beſides,

Beſides, we are Creatures but of a Day; our Life here is as nothing; we may be paſt uſing any thing of this World, in a very ſhort time; why then ſhould our Care for Life extend farther than our Life it ſelf?

To Day indeed we want many things, and therefore we may reaſonably deſire them; we may well pray, as we are here taught by our *Saviour*, *give us this Day our daily Bread*; *i. e.* all things which are needful for this Day; but to Morrow we may be paſt uſing any of theſe things; we may conſequently then have no Need of them; and if not, we ſhall be as well without them.

However, if we live till to Morrow, *the Morrow will take Thought for the things of it ſelf*; for we prayed Yeſterday for our daily Bread, and we had it; and we did put up the ſame Petition to Day, and it is granted to us: and therefore if we live till to Morrow, let us but only put up the ſame Requeſt again; and there is no Cauſe to doubt, but that God, our heavenly Father, who is *the ſame Yeſterday*,

ſterday, to Day, and for ever, will be as willing and as able to grant our Requeſt then, as he is to Day, and as he was Yeſterday, and indeed has been every Day of our Life which is already paſt.

If therefore he thinks fit to prolong our Life to another Day, there is no doubt but that, upon our Petition, he will grant to us the neceſſary Means of preſerving it: and, on the other ſide, if it be his Pleaſure that this ſhall be our laſt Day, we ſhall need to be concerned for no more.

5. From this Petition of the Lord's Prayer we are likewiſe inſtructed in the Nature of Contentment. We hence learn what Portion or Quantity it is, which we ought to be ſatisfyed and contented with; for we are taught here to deſire and requeſt of God, only *daily Bread, i.e.* only the Neceſſaries, or the great Conveniencies of Life: and therefore certainly, if we have all which we our ſelves do deſire, and all which we ask for, we have great Cauſe to be ſatisfyed with our Portion.

And

And thus we are plainly directed by the *Apoſtle*, 1 Tim. vi. 7, 8. *We brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we can carry nothing out; and having Food and Raiment, let us be therewith content. We brought nothing into this World*; we came into it naked and helpleſs, not knowing in the leaſt how we ſhould do to live in it ſo much as one Day; and yet by God's Bleſſing we have hitherto lived in it, and have had all things needful ſupplied to us by the divine Bounty; and *it is certain that we can carry nothing out*; *i. e.* whether we have much or little in this World, when we go from hence we muſt leave all we have here behind us. And therefore, ſays the *Apoſtle*, ſeeing we had nothing of our own when we came hither, and ſeeing we can have nothing of our own, nor any Uſe of any thing which was our own, when we go from hence; if we have but enough to carry us thro' this World, this is all which we can have need of, this is all which we ſhall be the better for; and therefore if we have but

thus

thus much, we have good Reaſon to be ſatisfy'd with what we have; we have no Reaſon to murmur and complain againſt Providence, that we have no more. *Having Food and Raiment*, ſays he, (by which he means only the Neceſſaries of Life, and under which Words he comprehends all things that are neceſſary; *having Food and Raiment,) let us be therewith content.*

6. Another thing which we are inſtructed in, by this Petition, is our Obligation to Frequency and Conſtancy in Prayer; for here we are taught to pray only for the Bread of this preſent Day; *give us this Day our daily Bread.* Now ſuppoſe our Requeſt granted; ſuppoſe that God does give us, this Day, the Bread of this Day, *i e.* all Neceſſaries which we have preſent Occaſion for, yet what ſhall we do for the Bread of to Morrow? To Morrow, if we live till then, we ſhall have the ſame Needs which we have to Day; how ſhall we get them ſupplied? How do we think, but the ſame way by which

our

our preſent Wants are ſupplied; *i.e.* by Prayer to God? But we do not pray to Day for the Bread of to Morrow, and therefore it plainly follows that we muſt pray for that to Morrow; and the next Day, for the Bread of the next Day; and ſo again and again, every Day while we live. And every Day of our Lives, which we paſs over without Prayer to God, we are in Danger of wanting even the Neceſſaries of Nature; for God has promiſed even theſe Neceſſaries only upon the Condition of our asking for them; and we are not taught, we are not warranted to ask for the Neceſſaries of any Day, till the Day it ſelf be come.

Thus it appears that God deſign'd we ſhould live in a conſtant Dependence upon him, and that we ſhould pray to him continually; and if at any time we omit, or neglect this Duty, we have no Claim, by Promiſe, to his Protection and Bleſſing. He may indeed, of his abundant Goodneſs, give us what we want without our asking; and he is oftentimes very kind even to the unthankful and to the evil.

But

But from what God may do if he pleaſes, we can't argue that he will do it; ſo that we can have no good Aſſurance of the Continuance of his Kindneſs and Goodneſs to us, but upon the Condition of our own continual and inceſſant Prayers.

7. What we pray for, we ought alſo to labour for; and if we do not, 'tis a Sign our Deſires of it are not hearty, and ſo we may reaſonably fear our Prayers for it will not be ſucceſsful.

This is generally true in all our Petitions to God, whatever the Subject Matter of them is. For even when we pray for Spirituals, as for any Grace or Virtue, unleſs we likewiſe endeavour after it, and uſe the Means of obtaining it, there is no Promiſe of God, nor any good Reaſon to hope, that he will work it in us, or beſtow it upon us. And there is the ſame Reaſon for Temporals: and therefore another thing, which we are inſtructed in from this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *give us this Day our daily Bread*, is, that 'tis our Duty alſo to ſeek honeſtly to get

get our own Living, by Diligence and Induſtry, in that lawful Trade, or Calling, or Profeſſion, which we have been brought up to, or are placed in. For there is no Reaſon ever to expect any thing by a Miracle, which may be obtained by the Uſe of natural Means; and therefore we may obſerve, (and it is a Caſe which ſuits well the Subject we are now ſpeaking of;) that while the *Iſraelites* were in a barren Wilderneſs, wherein was no Water, and nothing growing that was fit for Food, at leaſt not ſufficient for ſo great a Multitude; God was pleaſed to work Miracles for their Support: for *he clave the Rocks in the Wilderneſs, and gave them Drink as out of the great Depths*, Pſal. lxxviii. 15. *He brought Streams alſo out of the Rock, and cauſed Waters to run down like Rivers*, ℣. 16. and made the Streams flowing from this Fountain to follow them all the way as they went; whence the *Apoſtle* ſays, *they drank of that Rock that followed them*, [1 Cor. x. 4. *vid. Ham. Annot. in loc.*] He ſhewed his miraculous Power alſo in furniſhing a Table for them in

in the Wilderneſs, for *he commanded the Clouds from above, and opened the Doors of Heaven, and rained down Manna upon them to eat, and gave them of the Corn of Heaven*, Pſal. lxxviii. 23, 24. Thus did God then, when there was no other Supply to be had, give them every Day their daily Bread, as it were immediately with his own Hand. But when the Reaſon of this Miracle ceaſed, the Miracle ceaſed too; when they might be ſupplied the ordinary way, God thought not fit to ſupply them any longer in this extraordinary manner; and ſo 'tis noted in *Joſh.* v. 12. that when they were paſſed over *Jordan*, and encamped in *Gilgal, they did eat of the old Corn of the Land*; and that *the Manna ceaſed on the Morrow, after they had eaten of the old Corn of the Land; neither had the Children of Iſrael Manna any more.* They were then come to a Land inhabited, wherein the Corn of the laſt Year's Harveſt had been laid up by the *Canaanites* againſt their Coming, and wherein they themſelves, for the future, were to plant, and to ſow, and to reap; and therefore

God, by putting a Stop then to the falling of Manna, ſhewed them, that now in a fruitful Land Labour and Induſtry would be the Means of obtaining their Bread from God.

And 'tis generally ſo; honeſt Labour is the natural Means of procuring ſuch things as are needful for the Body; and there is nothing more than that, with the Bleſſing of God upon it, which is ordinarily needful for this Purpoſe. So that theſe being in our own Power, (for if God has given us Strength to labour, we may make Uſe of it; and if we beg his Bleſſing upon our Labour, he has promiſed to give it. I ſay, theſe being both in our own Power,) if we do not honeſtly work for our Living, as well as pray for it, we may be in want even of Neceſſaries, and yet there may be no Failure at all in God's Care and Providence; we may have none to blame for it, but our ſelves.

8. Being taught here to beg our Bread of God, we are hereby warned not to receive it but from him; not to receive it from

from the Devil, tho' it be offered to us by him.

Now then, we receive our Bread from God, not only when we receive it by a Miracle, as the *Iſraelites* did their *Manna* in the Wilderneſs; or as *Elijah* did the *Bread* and *Fleſh*, which were brought him every Morning and Evening by the *Ravens*; but likewiſe when it is the Fruit of our honeſt Induſtry, in ſome lawful Calling, or when it comes to us by Gift or Inheritance from thoſe who were lawfully poſſeſſed thereof.

And then, on the other ſide, we do receive our Bread not from God but from the Devil, when we procure it by any ſinful Means, by the Exerciſe of any unlawful Trade, by any Fraud or Injuſtice in our Dealings, by committing any Sin, and making Shipwrack of a good Conſcience, in order either to get or keep a Place of Profit.

For to beg our Bread of God, and at the ſame time to take any unlawful Courſe to procure it, is not only an Argument of our Diſtruſt of God, and that we do not think

think him able to grant our Requeſts, but 'tis likewiſe a great Indignity and Affront offered to him; for when we uſe any indirect or forbidden Means to obtain that which we ſeem to beg of God as his Gift, we thereby make it plainly appear, that all our Prayer to him is nothing elſe but Inſinuation and Flattery; and that tho' we make our Court to him in Words, our inward Worſhip and Devotion is paid to the Devil.

9. Laſtly; when we uſe this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, we do not ſay, give *me*, but give *us* our daily Bread; *i. e.* we beg for a Supply of other's Wants, as well as of our own; we pray that neither we our ſelves, nor any elſe, may want the Neceſſaries for the Support of Life. Now (as was ſaid before,) what we pray for, we ought alſo to endeavour: ſo that another Duty, which we are likewiſe plainly inſtructed in, by our Uſe of this Petition, is the great Duty of Charity and Bounty to the Poor and Needy.

For we pray to God that none may want, but we know there are a great many, who, either thro' Age or Sickneſs, are not able to work for their Living; and that there are a great many working and induſtrious Poor, who either cannot get ſufficient Employment; or who, by a full Employment, by riſing early, ſitting up late, and working hard all the Day, cannot get a ſufficient Maintenance for their numerous Family of Children; and that there are likewiſe a great many others, who having once had enough both for their own Needs, and to contribute towards the Maintenance of the helpleſs Poor, are by ſome Act of Providence, as by Fire, Robbery, Inundation, or the like, reduced to great Extremities, and for the preſent rendred uncapable to follow their former Employments, for want of Stock to work upon. When therefore we pray that even theſe alſo, as well as others, may have their Wants ſupplied, we ought our ſelves freely to contribute towards their Support. And in caſe God has ſo bleſſed our Induſtry, that we have more

more than we need for our ſelves, it is our Duty to aſſign the Overplus, or at leaſt a conſiderable Portion thereof, to the Uſe of thoſe who have nothing, or not enough to maintain them; and by our very putting up of this Petition, we engage our ſelves to do ſo. And ſo St. *James* argues, *Jam.* ii. 15, 16. *If a Brother or a Siſter be naked, and be deſtitute of daily Food, and one of you ſay unto them, Depart in Peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which be needful for the Body, what doth it profit?*

Indeed, when we have nothing to give to a Brother or a Siſter that is needy, but good Wiſhes only; when they are all which we can give, they will be accepted; but when God has put it into our Power to do them good, as well as to wiſh them well, and we only pray that their Wants may be ſupplied, but will not give any thing of our own towards it; it is a certain Sign that our Prayers are not hearty, and that our Deſires are not ſincere; it's a certain Argument, that the

Love which we profeſs towards them is only in Word and in Tongue, not as it ſhould be, *in Deed, and in Truth*, 1 Joh. iii. 18. For whatever a Man earneſtly deſires ſhould be done, he, of Courſe, endeavours to do, if it be in his Power.

Now he that adminiſtreth Seed to the Sower, both miniſter Bread for your Food, and multiply your Seed ſown, and increaſe the Fruits of your Righteouſneſs, 2 Cor. ix. 10.

Forgive us our

DEBTS,

As we forgive our

DEBTORS,

EXPLAINED.

DISCOURSE LIV.

Forgive us our Debts, &c. explain'd.

MATTH. vi. 12, 14, 15.

And forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.

For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you.

But if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes,

paſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.

THE firſt of theſe three Verſes, that I have choſen for my Text, contains the fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, the four former I have already diſcourſed of; *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors.* In which Petition there is firſt a Requeſt put up to God, that he would forgive us our Treſpaſſes; and ſecondly there is a Reaſon added to enforce the Requeſt, or rather a Reaſon offered to God to induce him to grant our Requeſt; *as we forgive our Debtors*; or as St. *Luke* expreſſes it, *Luke* xi. 4. *for we alſo forgive every one that is indebted to us.* And the two other Verſes of the Text, *viz.* the 14th and 15th, give an Account of the Reaſon of the Addition of that laſt Clauſe in the Petition, *as we forgive our Debtors*; which (as our *Saviour* ſays) was this, becauſe our Sins will not be forgiven to us only upon our Petition,

on, unleſs we our ſelves do ſhew ſuch Mercy to Men, as we here requeſt of God; but that if we forgive Men their Treſpaſſes againſt us, then (upon our Repentance and Confeſſion, and begging Pardon of God) he alſo will forgive our Sins and Treſpaſſes againſt him. *For if ye*, &c.

Now, tho' it was very proper that this Account ſhould be given of the Reaſon of the Addition of that Clauſe in the Petition, *as we forgive our Debtors*, or, *for we forgive our Debtors*; yet it was not fit, that when our *Saviour* was teaching his Diſciples a Pattern or Form of Prayer, he ſhould break off in the middle of the Prayer it ſelf, to give this Account of that particular Clauſe; but it was more proper that he ſhould firſt recite the whole Prayer throughout, and then afterwards, in a Diſcourſe addreſſed to his Diſciples, give the Reaſon of any Clauſe in it which might be liable to be miſunderſtood, or excepted againſt; this therefore he does; for after he had taught them the fifth Petition,

tition, at the 12th ℣. in the Words before read to you; *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*; he immediately adds, in the 13th ℣, the ſixth Petition, and the Concluſion of the Prayer; and then, when he had quite finiſhed the whole Prayer, he adds thoſe Words before read, in the 14th and 15th Verſes, to give a Reaſon of that Clauſe in the fifth Petition, which he thought might not be well underſtood, or might be excepted againſt; and this Method of Diſcourſe was proper and natural.

But my preſent Deſign being to treat of every Clauſe or Petition of this Prayer by itſelf, to give the Meaning thereof, and to ground a practical Diſcourſe thereupon; I thought it would be more proper for me, now that I am treating of this fifth Petition, *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*, to treat alſo at the ſame time of that Reaſon which our *Saviour* himſelf gives of this Petition, in thoſe two Verſes which are added by the *Evangeliſt*, after he had recited the whole

whole Prayer. And this was the Reaſon why, when I named my Text, I named the 12th, 14th, and 15th Verſes; which three Verſes do all belong to the ſame Subject; omitting, for the preſent, the 13th ℣, which belongs to another Subject, and contains the ſixth Petition of this Prayer, and the Concluſion of it, and reſerving that to be diſcourſed of at another time. *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*; that's the Petition I am now to treat of; and then follows the Reaſon of the laſt Clauſe of the Petition; *for if ye*, &c.

In diſcourſing of this fifth Petition of the Lord's Prayer, I ſhall obſerve the ſame Method which I have done in diſcourſing of the foregoing ones; *i. e.*

I. I ſhall explain the Meaning of it, and ſhew what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God. And,

II. I ſhall ſhew what good Leſſons we are

are taught, what Duties we are inſtructed in, and oblig'd to, by our Uſe of this Petition.

And, in ſpeaking to theſe two Heads, I ſhall have Occaſion to diſcourſe as much as I ſuppoſe ſhall be needful, concerning thoſe Words which are added by our *Saviour*, in the 14th and 15th Verſes, to give an Account of the Reaſon of his making our Forgiveneſs of others, the Condition of our asking Forgiveneſs of God. *For if ye forgive*, &c.

I. I ſhall explain the Meaning of this Petition, and ſhew what Senſe we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God, *forgive us our Debts, as we*, &c.

Forgive us our Debts; the Word, in the *Greek* of St. *Matthew*'s Goſpel, is, ὀφειλήμα]α; which is truly and rightly here tranſlated, *Debts*; but in the *Greek* of St. *Luke's* Goſpel, 'tis ἁμαρτίας, *i. e. Sins*; and ſo 'tis there tranſlated, *forgive us our Sins:* and in the Form which we do

do commonly uſe, we ſay, *Treſpaſſes*; *forgive us our Treſpaſſes.* By which Word, *Treſpaſs*, we uſually underſtand a leſs Fault than we do by the Word *Sin*: and this Word, I mean the *Greek* Word, παράπτωμα, which is uſually tranſlated a Treſpaſs, is the ſame Word which is thrice uſed in the 14th and 15th Verſes, where our *Saviour* ſhews the Neceſſity of our forgiving Men their Treſpaſſes againſt us, in order to our obtaining of God the Forgiveneſs of our Sins or Treſpaſſes againſt him. *For if ye forgive Men their Treſpaſſes, your*, &c.

But it is all one which of theſe Words we uſe, *Debts*, or *Sins*, or *Treſpaſſes*; becauſe in this Place they muſt all have the ſame Meaning: for what is a *Treſpaſs* againſt God, but only the doing ſomething which he has forbidden? And this is likewiſe a *Sin*; for *Sin* (as the *Apoſtle* ſays,) *is the Tranſgreſſion of the Law*; and this ſame may alſo be well called a *Debt*; for by tranſgreſſing the Law of God in any Point, we become obnoxious to him, we owe

owe him Satisfaction for the Injury, either by making Reparation, or, (ſince that can't be done by us,) by ſuffering the Puniſhment due to our Tranſgreſſion.

I ſhall therefore, for the Explication of this Petition, do theſe two things: 1. I ſhall explain the Matter of the Petition; I ſhall ſhew what it is which we here beg of God, what it is to have our Sins *forgiven* us. And, 2. I ſhall ſhew what it is which we do here declare we have done, and do; or do engage and promiſe that we will do, as a Condition on our Part, on which only we beg Forgiveneſs of God. Forgive us, *as we forgive our Debtors*; or, *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.*

1. I ſhall explain the Matter of the Petition; I ſhall ſhew what it is which we do here beg of God; *forgive us our Treſpaſſes*; what it is to have our Sins *forgiven* us.

Now by every Sin againſt God, by every Tranſgreſſion of his Laws, we affront the

the divine Majeſty, we reſiſt and oppoſe his Authority, we do Wrong and Injury to him, to whom all our Service is due; but now every Injury done to another, naturally obliges to Satisfaction, and we continue unjuſt till we repair the Damage we have done.

This therefore is what, by our Sins againſt God, we have made neceſſary to our ſelves, we muſt repair the Injury we have done him, we muſt pay the Debt which we owe him.

But alas! this is impoſſible for us to do; for all the Good we can do, extends not to him; and tho' we ſhould ſpend all the remaining Part of our Lives in his faithful Service, and never again at any time tranſgreſs his Commandments, this would be no Satisfaction or Amends to him. By this indeed we ſhould avoid running deeper in his Debt; but our barely forbearing to contract a new Debt, cannot be accounted a Payment of the Debt we have already contracted: no Man is ever thought to pay what he has borrow'd,

row'd, only by forbearing to borrow more. But this is all which we can poſſibly do, we can only forbear adding new Treſpaſſes to our former, but we can by no Means ever recompenſe, or make him Satisfaction, for thoſe which we have already done. It remains therefore that for theſe, we are, and always ſhall be liable to the Laſh of the Law; *i. e.* obnoxious to ſuffer the Puniſhment threatned by the Law, to the Tranſgreſſors of it; for *curſed is every one that continueth not in all things that are written in the Law to do them.* And this Puniſhment comprehends all thoſe Evils which God hath any where threatned to Sin, all manner of Evils, ſpiritual and temporal, and eſpecially Death; *the Wages of Sin is Death*, ſays the *Apoſtle*, *i. e.* eternal Death; this appears by the Oppoſition which is there made by the *Apoſtle* between Death and Life; *the Wages of Sin is Death, but the Gift of God is eternal Life*; now that *Death* which is oppoſite to eternal Life, is *eternal Death*; *i. e.* the

i. e. the eternal Torment both of Body and Soul in Hell: this is the Wages of Sin, this is the Puniſhment due to every Tranſgreſſion of the Law of God; and this is what, being Sinners, we are liable to be ſentenced to, and to have inflicted upon us, whenever God pleaſes.

This therefore is what we pray for in this Petition, when we ſay, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes.* We pray that God would be pleaſed not to exact this Puniſhment of us; we pray, that ſince we can make him no true Satisfaction for the Injury we have done him, he, of his great Goodneſs and Clemency, would be pleaſed to paſs it by, and not exact any Satisfaction from us; *i. e.* that he would not inflict upon us any of thoſe Evils which he has threatned to the Tranſgreſſors of his Laws; and above all, not that which is the proper Wages of Sin, the eternal Torments of Hell. This is what we ask in this Petition, that God would not impute our Sins to us, to our Condemnation. *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes.*

But when we ſay, forgive us our Treſpaſſes, it is ſuppos'd that we have treſpaſſed; by the very asking Forgiveneſs of our Sins, we own that we have ſinned: for if we had no Need of Pardon, (as we ſhould not have if we were innocent,) there would be no Reaſon to ask Pardon. Nay indeed, to put up this Petition to God, to ſay, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes*, when at the ſame time we are not conſcious to our ſelves that we have ſinned, and that we do greatly ſtand in Need of Pardon, is no better than mocking or trifling with God.

And therefore we may well underſtand this Petition, for Pardon of Sin, as including in it a Confeſſion of our Sins to God, as well as a Prayer for Forgiveneſs.

I proceed now, in the ſecond Place,

2. To ſhew what it is which we here declare we have done, and do; or do engage and promiſe that we will do, as a Condition on our Part, on which only we

we beg Forgiveneſs of God; *forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*; or, *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.*

And what we here declare and promiſe, is, that we have ſhewn, and that we do and will ſhew the ſame Kindneſs to our Brother who has injured us, which we beg God would ſhew to us who have treſpaſſed againſt him.

Now, (as was ſaid before,) what we beg of God, is, that ſince we cannot make him true Satisfaction for our Sins, he would not exact of us the Puniſhment of them; this therefore is what we here declare and engage, on our Part, *viz.* that we will not exact of our Brother a Debt which he owes us, if he be not able to pay it; or if he cannot recompenſe us for any other Injury, that we will not deſire that Satisfaction which the Law, if we ſhould go to the Strictneſs of it, would allow; *i. e.* to keep his Body in Priſon, or to put him to Pain and Miſery; by which we ſhould only do

him Evil, but do our ſelves no Good, receive no real Amends.

In a Word; this is what we here engage and promiſe, that in Caſe of any Injury or Wrong done to us, by any Neighbour, we will be content with ſuch Satisfaction as he can make us; that if he be not well able to make us perfect Amends, we will be ſatisfied with a ſmaller Recompence; and that if he can make us no Amends at all, we will freely forgive the Injury; neither doing him our ſelves, any Injury like to that which he has done us, nor ſo much as deſiring that any ſuch Evil may befal him; but that we will as truly deſire, and as heartily endeavour to procure his Eaſe, and promote his Welfare, as if he had never done us any Wrong at all.

But whenever we made Profeſſion of any thing which is good concerning our ſelves, we ought to do it with Modeſty and Humility, and a kind of Diſtruſt of our ſelves; it becomes us to have ſome Fear upon our ſelves, leſt our natural Self-love

ſhould

ſhould make us think of our ſelves more highly than we ought to think, according to the Example of the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Cor.* iv. 4. *I know nothing by my ſelf, yet am I not hereby juſtified, but he that judgeth me is the Lord*; for we may ſee no Fault in our ſelves, our own Heart may abſolve us, and yet *God*, who (as the *Apoſtle* ſays, 1 *Joh.* iii. 20.) *is greater than our Hearts, i. e.* who knows what is within us, much better than we our ſelves do, may ſee that we are not ſo blameleſs as we think our ſelves; and therefore, I ſay, 'tis very reaſonable, whenever we declare any thing concerning our ſelves, that is good, (as we do in this Clauſe of the Lord's Prayer, when we ſay that *we do forgive thoſe that treſpaſs againſt us*;) that we ſhould do it with Modeſty and Diffidence of our ſelves, and accompany our Profeſſion of our own Sincerity, with a ſecret Wiſh or Petition, that God would be pleaſed to make us ſuch, (if we are not perfectly ſuch already,) as we do

declare and believe our ſelves to be.

An excellent Example of this Humility, and modeſt Diſtruſt of our ſelves, we have in *Mark* ix. 24. in the Man who brought his Son to our *Saviour* for Cure, who was poſſeſſed with a dumb Spirit; *I ſpake*, ſays he, *to thy Diſciples, that they ſhould caſt him out, and they could not*, ℣. 18. *But if thou canſt do any thing, have Compaſſion on us, and help us*, ℣. 22. *Jeſus ſaid unto him, If thou canſt believe, all things are poſſible to him that believeth*, ℣. 23. and then it follows, ℣. 24. *And ſtreightway the Father of the Child cryed out, and ſaid with Tears, Lord, I believe*; *i. e.* if this be the Condition of my Son's Cure, that I ſhould believe that thou art able to cure him, I have performed this Condition already; for I do firmly believe that thou art able to do it. And, in this, he doubtleſs ſpake the true Senſe of his Mind. But then, knowing how deceitful the Heart of Man is, and that 'twas poſſible his Faith might not be ſo good

as

as he himſelf took it to be, he immediately adds the following Word, *help thou mine Unbelief. Lord, I believe, help thou mine Unbelief.* 'Tis as if he had ſaid, I am not conſcious to my ſelf of any Weakneſs in my Faith, of any Mixture of Diſtruſt or Doubtfulneſs in my Belief of thy Power to cure my Son, but there may be Faults in me which I my ſelf cannot diſcern, and my Faith, perhaps, may not be ſo good as I take it to be; therefore, be thou pleaſed to help my Unbelief; *i. e.* if there be any Fault or Deficiency in my Faith, which I my ſelf do not diſcern, be thou pleaſed of thy great Goodneſs to forgive it, and by the Help of thy Grace to ſupply it.

And with ſuch Modeſty and Humility, and Diſtruſt of our ſelves, we ought always to utter theſe Words in Prayer to God, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us:* when we ſay, *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*; we declare that we do, we promiſe that we will for-

give thoſe who do us Wrong; and we can't ſay theſe Words with Sincerity, and in Truth, unleſs we do forgive them. Nay, indeed we not only mock God, but we likewiſe curſe our ſelves, every time that we repeat this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, if at the ſame time we are conſcious to our ſelves, that we bear Hatred and Malice in our Hearts, that we deſign or wiſh Evil to any Perſon who has done us Injury. But tho' we are in Charity with all the World, 'tis poſſible we may not be in ſuch perfect Charity as we ſhould be; 'tis poſſible there may be a Defect in our Charity, tho' we our ſelves do not diſcern it; 'tis poſſible that our Forgiveneſs of others may not be ſo full and hearty as it ought to be; and therefore 'tis very reaſonable that we ſhould always accompany this Profeſſion or Declaration of our Charity to, and Forgiveneſs of others, with earneſt Prayer to God, to ſupply the Defects of it by his Grace, and to make us grow and increaſe in it, every Day more and more.

This

This then is the full Meaning of this Petition; 'tis a Confeſſion of our Sins, joined with a Prayer for the Pardon of them; and 'tis a ſincere Declaration of our own Charity to others, joined with earneſt Prayer to God for the Increaſe and Perfection of it. So that this is the Senſe which we ought to have in our Minds, when we utter theſe Words in Prayer to God, *Forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*; 'tis as if we ſhould ſay.

" We are ſenſible, O God, we are ve-
" ry ſenſible, that we have in many
" things tranſgreſs'd thy holy and righ-
" teous Laws. Our own Conſciences
" witneſs againſt us, that we have left
" undone thoſe things which we ought
" to have done, and that we have done
" thoſe things which we ought not to
" have done; but we cannot call back
" our miſ-ſpent time; and to undo our
" former Works, we are not able: and
" how to make thee any Recompence
" for our manifold Treſpaſſes, we know
" not;

" not; and therefore we earneſtly de-
" ſire, and we alſo hope in thy Good-
" neſs, that thy Debt, which we are not
" able to pay, thou wilt freely forgive
" us; for this is what thou haſt com-
" manded us to do, to thoſe who treſ-
" paſs againſt us. Thou haſt made our
" Forgiveneſs of others the Condition of
" our obtaining Forgiveneſs from thee;
" and this Condition, as being indeed very
" equal and reaſonable, we approve of, and
" do fulfil. We here declare that we have
" dealt, and will deal ſo by others who
" offend or injure us, as we deſire to
" be dealt with by thee. We here de-
" clare that we have not, and will not
" demand, what we know they are not
" able to pay; that we do not, and will
" not avenge their Wrongs, but heartily
" and fully forgive them, even as we de-
" ſire to be forgiven by thee. And this
" Declaration we make before thee, in
" the Sincerity of our Hearts, and we
" hope there is nothing wanting on our
" Part, in our Forgiveneſs of others, to

" make

" make us capable of thy Pardon: but " if there be, and we cannot be ſure " there is not, then we humbly beſeech " thee to ſupply this Want, and to give us " thy Grace, that we may never forfeit " our Title to thy Pardon upon our Re- " pentance, by denying Pardon, by bear- " ing Hatred or Malice, or a Spirit of " Revenge to any who treſpaſs againſt " us.

And ſo much may ſerve for the Explication of this Petition.

But as all the former Petitions of the Lord's Prayer did inſtruct us in ſome Duties, ſo likewiſe does this. And this was the ſecond thing I propounded to do, in diſcourſing upon theſe Words, *viz.*

II. To ſhew what good Leſſons we are taught, what Duties we are inſtructed in, and oblig'd to, by our Uſe of this Petition; *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.*

And

And there are chiefly three things which we may learn from hence. 1. In general; that there is ſome Condition neceſſary on our Part, to qualify us to obtain Pardon of our Sins. 2. And more particularly that our forgiving others their Treſpaſſes againſt us, is a neceſſary Condition of obtaining our own Pardon. And, 3. Laſtly; we are hence likewiſe inſtructed in the Nature of that Forgiveneſs, which it is our Duty to grant to thoſe who treſpaſs againſt us.

1. I ſay, we may hence learn in general, that there is ſome Condition neceſſary on our Part, to qualify us to obtain Pardon of our Sins; *forgive us our Treſpaſſes, as we forgive*; or, *if we forgive*; or, (as 'tis expreſs'd in St. *Luke,) for we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.* Here is a Condition plainly ſuppos'd to be done and performed by us, at the time when we put up this Petition for Pardon.

And

And the Truth is, God has no where promiſed that he will pardon our Sins abſolutely, without any Condition, or only upon the Condition of our asking Pardon; and what God has not promiſed to grant, we cannot ask with any Aſſurance of having it granted. For the only juſt Ground of a good Aſſurance, that our Prayers will be anſwered, is a Perſuaſion that the Matter of them is ſuch as is agreeable to the Goodneſs and Promiſes of God; according to that of the *Apoſtle*, 1 *Joh.* v. 14. *This is the Confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing, according to his Will, he heareth us.* Nay, indeed, to ask any thing of God which he has promiſed only upon Condition, without performing, ſo far as we are able, the Condition upon which he has promiſed it, argues a mean Opinion of God, and offers a direct Affront to him. For, by putting up ſuch a Petition, we do as good as ſay, that tho' indeed God ſeems reſolv'd not to grant us the thing which we ask, but upon certain Terms

Terms and Conditions, yet we hope to cheat him out of his Kindneſs by Flattery and fair Speeches, without performing the Conditions required by him.

Seeing then that Forgiveneſs of Sins will not be granted to us, but upon certain Terms and Conditions to be performed on our Part, it is our Duty to inform our ſelves what they are, and to endeavour, before we preſume to put up this Petition, to qualify our ſelves to receive the Pardon which we pray for.

Now the Conditions upon which only God has promiſed to pardon our Sins, are theſe three: (1.) Repentance; (2.) Prayer; and, (3.) Forgiveneſs of others.

And the ſecond of theſe Conditions we do actually perform, when we uſe the Lord's Prayer, or when we put up this ſame Petition in any other Form of Confeſſion and Supplication; and the third of them, *viz.* our Forgiveneſs of others, is, as I ſaid, a particular Duty which we are eſpecially taught in this Petition, and of which I ſhall diſcourſe ſomewhat by

and

and by. So that the only thing now to be done, is to ſhew that Repentance is a neceſſary Condition of obtaining Pardon without which all our Prayers for it will be unavailable. And for the Proof of this, it may be ſufficient to cite two or three plain Teſtimonies of holy Scripture, ſuch as that of *Iſaiah*, Ch. i. *v.* 16. *&c.* where after the *Prophet* had declar'd at large the Unacceptableneſs of the Prayer and Sacrifices of the *Jews*, he propoſes this as the only Method to make them better accepted for the future, and available for their Pardon; *waſh you*, ſays he, *make you clean, put away the Evil of your Doings from before mine Eyes; ceaſe to do Evil, learn to do well; ſeek Judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the Widow. Come now, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord; tho' your Sins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow; tho' they be red, like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wool.* And ſuch another Place, to this Purpoſe, is that in

Ezek.

Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. *If the wicked will turn from all his Sins that he hath committed, and keep all my Statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he ſhall ſurely live, he ſhall not die; all his Tranſgreſſions that he hath committed, they ſhall not be mentioned unto him; in his Righteouſneſs that he hath done, he ſhall live.* And ſuch another is that in *Prov.* xxviii. 13. *He that covereth his Sins ſhall not proſper, but whoſo confeſſeth and forſaketh them, ſhall have Mercy.* Upon theſe Terms Pardon was promiſed by God to Sinners in the Old Teſtament; and upon the ſame, and no other, it is promiſed in the New, as may be ſeen (to name no other Places,) in *Acts* iii. 19. *Repent ye, therefore, and be converted, that your Sins may be blotted out.*

Seeing therefore we can obtain Pardon upon no other Terms than our Repentance, 'tis to no Purpoſe to pray for it, ſo long as we neglect to perform this

this Condition. And therefore from this Petition in the Lord's Prayer, wherein we are taught to pray for Pardon, we are likewiſe plainly inſtructed, that it is our indiſpenſable Duty, by a hearty Repentance for all our Sins, to qualify our ſelves to receive that Pardon which we pray for.

And the leaſt that can be accounted Repentance, for any Sins, of any kind, which we have been guilty of, is an hearty Sorrow for what we have done amiſs, and a ſincere Reſolution and Endeavour not to commit them again; this is the only Notion of true Repentance which the Scripture teaches; and therefore, unleſs we do thus truly repent us of our Sins, 'tis to no manner of purpoſe to put up this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, *forgive us our Treſpaſſes*; for, till then, it will not be heard and anſwered.

But yet even theſe, I mean a Sorrow for our paſt Sins, and the forbearing to repeat them, are not a ſufficient Repen-

tance for all Sins; for where it can be done, we muſt do more than this, I mean, we muſt undo our former Works, we muſt ſet to right what we have put out of Order; and this is what may be done in moſt of the Sins of Injuſtice towards Men. The Damage we have done to our Neighbour, we may repair; the Goods we have wrongfully taken or detain'd from him, we may reſtore; and for any other Injury which we have done him, we may make him Satisfaction. And this is what muſt be done, if we can do it, before we can ſay this Petition of the Lord's Prayer; *i. e.* before we may preſume to beg Pardon of God for any ſuch Sins. And ſo we are plainly taught by our *Saviour* himſelf, in *Matth.* v. 23. *If thou bring thy Gift to the Altar, and there remembreſt that thy Brother hath ought againſt thee, leave there thy Gift before the Altar, and go thy way; firſt be reconciled to thy Brother, and then come and offer thy Gift.* But,

2. As

2. As from this Petition of the Lord's Prayer, wherein we are taught to beg Pardon of our Sins, not abſolutely, but conditionally, as we forgive others; we learn in general that there is ſomewhat to be done on our Part, to qualify us for God's Pardon; ſo we hence learn more particularly, that it is our neceſſary Condition to qualify us to pray for the Pardon of our own Sins againſt God, that we ſhould exerciſe the ſame Mercy and Compaſſion towards Men who have treſpaſſed againſt us, which we our ſelves do beg of God.

This is plainly implied in the Petition it ſelf; forgive us our Treſpaſſes, *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us*; but is more clearly and expreſſly taught in the two laſt Verſes of the Text, where our *Saviour* himſelf gives the Reaſon of his adding that Clauſe to the Petition, *as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. For*, ſays he, *if ye forgive Men their Treſ-*

paſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you; but if ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.

By the laſt of theſe Verſes it plainly appears, that our Forgiveneſs of others, is a neceſſary Condition of obtaining Forgiveneſs of our own Sins; *If ye forgive not*, &c. And by the firſt Verſe it ſhould ſeem that this is the only Condition required of us; ſo that if we do but perform this, we need not be concerned about any thing elſe; for ſo our *Saviour* ſays, *If ye forgive*, &c.

But for the right underſtanding of this, it is to be conſider'd, that it is very uſual, in holy Scripture, to attribute one thing as an Effect, to another thing as its Cauſe; which yet has not in it ſelf ſufficient Power to produce the Effect which is attributed to it, and ſo is only a partial Cauſe of it, which could not produce the Effect without the Concurrence of other Cauſes; and yet is ſo much a Cauſe too, that the other Cauſes without

without that would be as insufficient, as that would be without the others. We have several Instances of this in the beginning of this Sermon upon the Mount, wherein our *Saviour*, in those Sentences commonly called the *Beatitudes*, pronounces a Blessedness, and promises the Reward of Heaven, first to *the poor in Spirit*, then to the *Mourners* for Sin, then to *the Meek*, then to those who *hunger after Righteousness*, then to *the Merciful*, then to *the pure in Heart*, then to *the Peace-makers*, and at last to those who are *persecuted for Righteousness sake*; and yet 'tis certain that the Promises of the Gospel are not made to any one single Grace or Virtue, but to all in Conjunction.

And so 'tis here; Forgiveness of Injuries done to us, tho' it be a necessary Condition of our own obtaining Pardon from God, is not the only one. And this, I suppose, might be the Reason why, when our *Saviour* had spoken those Words in the 14th ℣. *If ye forgive*

Men their Treſpaſſes, your heavenly Father will alſo forgive you. By which we might have been led into a Miſtake, and have been induced to think, that Mercifulneſs was the *only* Qualification requiſite to intitle us to the divine Mercy. He immediately adds thoſe other Words, in the 15th ℣, to prevent that Miſtake; wherein he explains the foregoing Words, and plainly declares his Meaning to be, not, that if we forgive others, our Sins, without any other Condition or Qualification, will be forgiven us; but only that all other Conditions and Qualifications will be inſufficient without this; that this is at leaſt as neceſſary a Condition as any other. *If ye forgive not Men their Treſpaſſes, neither will your Father forgive your Treſpaſſes.*

And as this is a neceſſary Condition of our obtaining Pardon, ſo it is plainly a very equal Condition; for it is but reaſonable that we ſhould do as we would be done unto; that when we ask

ask for Pardon our ſelves, we ſhould freely grant it to thoſe who ask it of us.

And the Reaſonableneſs of this Condition is moſt excellently ſhewed by our Lord himſelf, in *Matth.* xviii. 23, *&c.* particularly upon theſe two Accounts.

(1.) Becauſe God, whom we have ſinned againſt, and whoſe Pardon we ask, is our Sovereign Lord, infinitely ſuperior to us, and we are his Creatures, his Slaves, his Vaſſals; but Men are all (in a manner) upon equal Terms with one another, for they are all Fellow-Servants of the ſame Lord; and therefore their Treſpaſſes againſt one another, (tho', as to the Matter of them, they were the ſame with our Treſpaſſes againſt God; yet) being committed only againſt Equals, would not be ſo heinous and unpardonable as our Sins are againſt him: for it is plainly a much greater Fault in a Subject, to affront or ſtrike his King, than it is to affront

or ſtrike his Fellow-Subject. And,

(2.) Becauſe our Offences againſt God are really greater in themſelves, than any Man's Offences are or can be againſt us: ſo that altho' we ſtood upon the ſame Terms, and on the ſame Level with Almighty God, which we do with one another, yet it would not be reaſonable in us, to deſire of him to pardon us our great Tranſgreſſions, unleſs we alſo can find in our Hearts to pardon others their lighter Treſpaſſes againſt us.

Both theſe Reaſons, I ſay, ſhewing how very fit and equitable it is, that we ſhould ſhew to others the like Mercy which we deſire of God, are excellently ſet forth by our *Saviour*, in that Place, in the Parable of a certain great King, who reckoning with his Servants, found one who owed him *ten thouſand Talents*; [a] *i. e.* almoſt two Millions of

[a] *Vid.* Marg. of gr. Bible. A Talent is 750 Ounces of Silver; 10000 Talents, at 5*s.* 2*d. per* Ounce, is 1937500*l.*

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our Money; which great Debt nevertheleſs, foraſmuch as the poor Man was not able to pay it, the King frankly forgave. But mark what follows, at ℣. 28. This ſame Man goes forth, and meets with one of his Fellow-Servants, who owed him but an hundred Pence[b], *i. e.* little more than 3 *l.* of our Money; a very Trifle, in Compariſon with the great Debt which had been juſt before forgiven him; (for an hundred Pence is not ſo much in Proportion to ten thouſand Talents[c], as one Peny of our Money is to two thouſand Pound;) and as ſoon as ever he ſees him, he takes him by the Throat, ſaying, Pay me what thou oweſt; upon which the other fell down at his Feet, beſeeching him but only to have a little Pa-

[b] A Penny is the eighth Part of an Ounce, *ergo* 100 Pence, 12 O. $\frac{1}{2}$. *i. e.* at 5 *s.* 2 *d.* *per* Ounce, amounts to 3 *l.* 4 *s.* 6 *d.*

[c] 100 Pence is to 10000 Talents, as one Penny to 2508 *l.* 12 *s.* 3 *d.* 10000 Talents is 602067 times as much as 100 Pence.

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tience with him, and he would pay him: but he would not, but went immediately, and caſt him into Priſon. And ſee what Judgment the King paſſed upon him for it, at the 32d, &c. Verſes; *Then his Lord, after he had called him, ſaid unto him, O thou wicked Servant, I, i. e.* I who am thy Lord and Maſter, who had more Power over thee, than thou hadſt over him, *I forgave thee all that Debt*, that great Debt of ten thouſand Talents, *becauſe thou deſiredſt me, and ſhouldſt not thou alſo have had Compaſſion on thy Fellow-Servant, even as I had Pity on thee? i. e.* was there not good Reaſon then, that when thy Fellow-Servant owed thee only ſuch a ſmall Sum as an hundred Pence, (not the ſix hundredth thouſandth part of the Sum which I forgave thee;) and when he only deſired time, and would, 'tis like, have been able to pay thee, if thou hadſt given him time; (was there not good Reaſon, I ſay,) that thou

ſhould'ſt

ſhould'ſt ſhew the like Compaſſion to him, (for the ſame it would not have been, but infinitely beneath it,) which I had ſhewed thee. And then it follows, ℣. 34. *And his Lord was wroth, and delivered him to the Tormentors*; *and ſo likewiſe*, ſays our *Saviour*, at the 35th ℣. (applying the Parable to this very Caſe;) *ſo likewiſe ſhall my heavenly Father do alſo unto you, if ye from your Hearts forgive not every one his Brother their Treſpaſſes.* And this ſame Argument is very well urged by the Son of *Syrach*, [*Eccluſ.* xxviii. 1, &c.] in theſe Words, *He that revengeth, ſhall find Vengeance from the Lord; and he will ſurely keep his Sins in Remembrance. Forgive thy Neighbour the Hurt that he hath done unto thee, ſo ſhall thy Sins alſo be forgiven when thou prayeſt. One Man beareth Hatred againſt another Man, and doth he ſeek Pardon from the Lord? He ſheweth no Mercy to a Man which is like himſelf, and doth*

he

he ask Forgiveneſs of his own Sins? But,

3. Laſtly; from this Petition we not only learn the Neceſſity of Forgiveneſs of Injuries, but we are alſo in good Meaſure inſtructed in the Nature of that Forgiveneſs which it is our Duty to grant to thoſe who treſpaſs againſt us; for we pray to God to forgive us, *as we forgive them.* But now,

(1.) What we here deſire of God, is, that he would forgive us all our Sins, the great as well as the ſmall; or indeed thoſe rather than theſe: for tho' no Sins are indeed ſmall, yet ſome are more heinous than others; and it is for our great and crying Sins, which we are moſt in fear of the divine Vengeance, and for which we are moſt earneſt in asking Forgiveneſs. We therefore, if we hope or expect to have theſe greateſt Sins forgiven us, ought likewiſe to forgive the greateſt Injuries which are done to us by others.

(2.) We

(2.) We pray for the Forgiveneſs of our Sins, tho' they are many; and we pray, or at leaſt we ſhould pray every Day for the Forgiveneſs of them; and we hope that tho' our Iniquities (as the *Pſalmiſt* ſays, *Pſal.* xl. 12.) are *more than the Hairs of our Head*, we ſhall yet obtain Remiſſion of them.

The Mercy, therefore, which we hope and expect from God, ſhould be a Pattern to us in ſhewing Mercy to others. Our Patience ſhould never be tyred out, we ſhould never be weary of forgiving. And ſo we are taught by our *Saviour* himſelf, *Luke* xvii. 4. *If thy Brother treſpaſs againſt thee ſeven times in a Day, and ſeven times in a Day turn again to thee, ſaying, I repent; thou ſhalt forgive him*; and that by ſeven times our *Saviour* meant not a ſmall, not any limited Number of times, appears plainly by his own Anſwer to St. *Peter*, *Matth.* xviii. 22. For when St. *Peter* had put the Queſtion to him, how often it was his Duty to forgive

give his Brother, whether until ſeven times; our Lord anſwered him, *I ſay not unto thee, until ſeven times, but until ſeventy times ſeven.*

(3.) Laſtly; the Pardon which we deſire of God is full and effectual; we pray that he would clearly blot out all our Iniquities, and free us from all the Puniſhment thereof.

Such therefore ſhould our Pardon be; of thoſe Treſpaſſes which are committed againſt us; it ſhould be a full and perfect Pardon; we ſhould forgive not only outwardly, but from the Heart; we ſhould not bear the leaſt Degree of Grudge or Malice in our Minds, towards thoſe whom we forgive, but ſhould be as perfectly reconcil'd to them, as if they had never offended us.

I conclude all, therefore, with thoſe Words of the *Apoſtle*, Coloſſ. iii. 12, 13. *Put on, as the Elect of God, holy and beloved, Bowels of Mercies, Kindneſs, Humble-*

Humbleneſs of Mind, Meekneſs, Long-ſuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any Man have a Quarrel or Complaint againſt any; even as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye.

FINIS.

G.R. III.